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AUTHOR Knight, Tony; Pearl, Arthur
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ABSTRACT

This paper argued that a general theory that can provide a precise definition of educational goals and the means to accomplish them is absolutely necessary to resuscitate schooling, and that the classroom is the place where theory can be developed and tested. The paper makes the following points: (1) a general theory is vitally needed to deal with educational issues; (2) a general theory based on clear and specific democratic principles is preferable to existing and proposed theories; (3) educational theory needs to be developed and tested from the ground up; (4) the classroom is where important educational change occurs; (5) the more ordinary the classroom and undistinguished by special features, the more useful it will be in testing theory and initiating widespread change; (6) teachers, parents, and students have vital roles to play in the development of educational theory; (7) privatization is not only a poor presentation of democratic education, it is grossly undemocratic and is inadequate as a general theory; (8) the more that university scholars work equally with teachers, parents, and students, the more useful they will be in helping to develop and test theory; and (9) the individual classroom is where theory is tested. (Contains 95 references. (Author/LMI)

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Tony Knight
La Trobe University,
Australia

Arthur Pearl.
U. California, Santa Cruz.

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Developing and Testing a General Theory of Education: The Role of Schools.

The intent of this paper is to make the following points:

1. A general theory is vitally needed to deal with educational issues,
2. A general theory based on clear and specific democratic principles is preferable to existing and proposed theories,
3. Educational theory needs to be developed and tested from the ground up;
4. The classroom, not remote governmental centers or research institutes is where important educational change occurs;
5. The more ordinary the classroom and undistinguished by special features, the more the useful it will be in testing theory and initiating wide-sweeping change,
6. Teachers, parent and students have vital roles to play in the development of educational theory,
7. Privatization, although presented as the epitome of democracy is not only a poor presentation of democratic education, it is grossly undemocratic and is inadequate as a general theory,
8. The more university scholars work as equal status partners and collaborator with teachers, parents and students, and the less they define themselves as outside experts the more useful they will be in helping develop and test theory,
9. The classroom, as distinct from "all" classrooms, or a large array of randomly selected subjects whose performance is contrasted with comparable controls, is where theory is tested.

This is in part because a general theory brings local community into its development, in part because only when students play an active role can there be meaning attached to evaluation, in part because the classroom is a logical place for the restoration of community to begin, and in part because only in a classroom can there be the balance and integration between frameworks and other initiatives, and the inclusion of ideas and interests of local communities.

Each new classroom test is not only replication but also provides opportunity for refinement and establishing the limits of applicability.

1. A general theory is vitally needed to deal with educational issues,

It is by the better world we can imagine that we judge the world we have. If we cease to judge the world we may find ourselves, very quickly, in one that is infinitely worse.

Margaret Atwood, Second Words. House of Anansi. 1982

Given the state of world affairs and the trend evident in world educational systems to elevate market driven "choice," to the status of theory, development of a comprehensive general theory that can provide precise definition of educational goals and the means to accomplish them has never been more important. It is precisely at this time retreat to the margins would have the most tragic results. This general theory, democratic education, is organized to encompass curriculum, governance, instruction, discipline, evaluation, administration and budgets. In work associated with this paper there is a description, explanation and defense of that theory and the various policies and practices that derive from it (see notes). In this paper we can only make a beginning case for a general educational theory, and outline an argument that such theory can only be developed and tested in an ordinary school setting.

Theory has become a devalued concept in this post modern era. Theory conjures up visions of grand narratives, the *bête noire* of postmodernists. We are not postmodernists. To the contrary, we believe a general theory provides a way out of the intellectual thicket that postmodernism has created. There is no place for theory when only differences are celebrated and scholars limit themselves to nibbling away at the margins. The postmodernist emphasis on deconstruction militates against a general and inclusive theory. Almost by definition the concern of a general theory moves from deconstruction to reconstruction. Postmodernists have reinforced the idea that a general theory is difficult; fraught with philosophical and practical problems; that efforts to establish one must be done cautiously; and, for the theory to be convincing it must be supported by a solid body of evidence so constructed that even the most skeptical will be persuaded. Which to us, means if the theory is to be believed, the beginning test of it must be small. And once established in a single classroom, it, through extension and replication in more and more classrooms, can be shown to apply to any situation in any classroom. Only when that happens can a general theory meet the rigorous demands of validation or proof.

Theory in education is resisted because: teachers are denied ownership of it, students are bewildered by it, and parents are confused by it. And considering what has been promoted as theory there is very good reason to be suspicious of the term.

This paper argues that a general theory is absolutely necessary to resuscitate schooling and that the classroom is the place to begin theory development, and the only place where it can be rigorously tested. Only with the classroom at the center is it possible to talk about a general theory. A general theory of education must be sufficiently explanatory to inform day to day school practice and therefore considerable more demands must be made of a theory than is required in a general philosophy of education. As we will discuss later there are many general philosophies of education but these are at best low level theories that describe (or prescribe) rather than explain.

Schooling has always been guided by some kind of underlying often unexpressed theory. Rationales have been concocted to explain the actions taken in classrooms. The guiding *raison d'être* for most schools throughout history was to teach only those things that were necessary for the perpetuation of the dominant culture. Instruction was conducted within the family or in a designated close knit homogeneous communal units. Even these simple systems were not free from controversy. Because the species by nature permanently alters the environment in every generation, cultures were in constant strain between holding to the past and moving to some undefined future. The future generally was an extrapolation of the present with no "perceived" difficult challenges.

Until very recently environmental alteration has been slow and the heavy educational emphasis on transmitting a particular version of the past was readily accepted. Except for the rarest instances, did preoccupation with past knowledge's, values, arts, skills and belief systems threaten the survival of the culture, and never was such an education perceived to be a threat to the continuation of the species. There were occasional tensions. Pythagoras found the Greeks relentlessly unreceptive to the notion of the square root of 2. His crime, like Galileo's many centuries later, was extending teaching beyond education's acceptable mission,

i. e., the perpetuation of existing dominant culture. In recent years feminists have stripped the mask of liberal democracy to reveal its patriarchy (e.g., Pateman 1985a; 1985b), and how patriarchy or sexism has been perpetuated in education, i. e., who is allowed to be taught what (Sadker & Sadker 1991).

To some extent the curriculum has been modified to alleviate this condition (Yates, 1993), and there have been similar modifications to deal with racial bias.

(not so with class- in the United States and Australia the myth of a classless society is not challenged in the formal curriculum.)

Modification of curriculum and instruction to reduce sexism and racism have been half-hearted and inconsistent. But more importantly these changes were not informed by a general theory that included equal encouragement. In fact the limited nature of educational theory and its inability to address the world of which it is a part means that gains made by women and minority are uneven, transitory, and often illusory. Part of a general theory of education requires that education be organized to act on the world to change it (Freire, 1968). Without such vision of reflected change we face the exceedingly difficult, if not insoluble problem of attempting to advance a particular group in a "zero-sum" world, i.e. for every winner there must be a loser, which means that for women to advance men must go backward. A zero sum world also requires that women to be pitted against minorities and minorities and women to be pitted against each other. The acceptance of a zero-sum world requires of education theory the establishment of some type of "fairness" system, e.g., a meritocracy in which the winners emerge after a fair fight. It is precisely the stripping away the thin veneer of alleged fairness to reveal the powerful forces of inequity that has left current educational theory in a shambles. And if that wasn't bad enough the emerging "negative sum"

world is much worse. In a negative sum world, for every winner there are multiple losers (Pearlstein, 1995) a situation not imagined yet alone confronted by existing educational theories. The nature of the opportunity structure is not discussed in relatively stable societies with tightly bound codes and systems of authority.

The educational system that developed in the Western world was patently unfair. It was designed for social reproduction. Those at the top of the social ladder were provided the education to keep them there, and those at the bottom received just enough to keep them where they were. However even though unfair, it was a workable, if not a very important, system. There was a close correspondence between the education provided and what employers at the time required, and the unfair system did not lead to an unraveling of the political structure or widespread alienation from politics and government.

In the 20th century all of this has changed. New modes of production have come into being and disappeared and with those changes an unrecognized quantum leap in the importance of education. In the 20th century a credentialed society was created. The school has been transformed from a relatively unimportant institution into the primary instrument for the maintenance of status flow. Schools were given the authority to provide the visas to the desired world of work. When schools gained such authority they draw interest and concern. When schools had little importance, what they did was largely a matter of each local community. But with their evolution come ineluctably, heightened concern for national standards, testing and formalized regulations. Equity in schooling became a major issue and schools rose in importance for both individuals and for the society as a whole. Business leaders wanted assurance that schools were preparing the type of worker needed for the foreseeable future. Parents wanted an education that would provide upward mobility for their children. The changing role of the school in a credentialed society with insufficient good jobs to go around, stimulated parents to seek a competitive advantage which undergirds the parental search for the "right" school, the "right" teacher, the "right" computer, the 'right phonics' program, hoping by these efforts they will have stolen a march on other parents. (Gewitz, et al. 1995)

The extent to which desire for advantage impinges on equity and equal opportunity is a matter a general theory must address. The desire for competitive edge is a major impetus for "choice" initiatives that will be discussed later in this paper. It also presents a challenge for middle class civil libertarians, who in theory desire an equal playing field for all children while at the same time want something extra for their children .

The impetus for competitive edge in a shrinking opportunity structure has a crippling impact on the debate over purposes and processes of schooling. Edwards and Whitty summarize the debate in the following manner:

It is being argued that schools will only improve if education is treated as a private good through the unconstrained play of market forces. From this radical perspective, a single mechanism is commonly presented as curing all educational ills. As Ronald Reagan claimed at a 1989 White House 'Workshop on Choice' -'Choice works, and it works with a vengeance' (1992, p. 101).

Insufficient emphasis has been given to the destructiveness of 'getting ahead at the expense of others' mentality in the education debates. Insistence on a competitive edge is to a large extent the response to the perception of the opportunity structure. If there is widespread belief that economic opportunity is lessening, and the gap between the rich and poor is increasing, it is not at all surprising that parents would do what they could to improve the likelihood of the children to be rich rather than poor. That actions taken to support such ambition could lead to an increasingly unstable and unsafe society is not given much consideration. To the contrary, getting ahead is often coupled with support for get tough crime measures, opposition to tax hikes, and decline in support for desegregation and other "social" programs. The logical continuation of these trends will be the breakdown of social order as forecast by Robert Kaplan (1994) and more vividly depicted in futuristic motion pictures (Blade Runner, 1972; Escape from New York, 1981; and the Mad Max series, 1980, 1981, and 1985). Similar pessimistic themes can be found in the music that teenagers listen to.

Popular culture may have greater influence on youth expectations than anything that goes on in schools. No adequate education theory can avoid dealing with the condition of the economy and the popular interpretations of that economy and how the interpretation informs future expectations and support for equity in schooling. Part of the application of democratic education theory in schools would have students actively participate in discussions about "government," the economy and their role in it. In these conversations students should be encouraged to imagine the world as they would like it to be and what it would take to make such an ideal real. We have in the past criticized educational theory and practice as exercises in dream killing. The dream killing takes the form of limiting discussion, placing a ceiling on aspirations, or by the most painful of all deaths for youth—excruciating boredom. A significant characteristic of a general democratic educational theory is the encouragement that it gives students for dreamtime.

The organization of work and the condition of the economy are only some of the many very difficult issues that need to be addressed in a general education theory. Given the magnitude of emerging problems it is extremely doubtful that a stable society can be achieved with an education whose major purpose is cultural transmission, the elders passing on to youth the accumulated richness of the past. The opposite may well be the case. Traditional education may be less than unreliable or inefficient. It may be totally dysfunctional. It is our contention that

students will learn to cope with the dynamics and scale of future developments only with a fundamentally altered education.

Education which began as an informal process and evolved into a large, cumbersome, bureaucratically managed, but nonetheless unimportant institution, now needs to be recast as the primary agency devoted to preparing all of society for its future challenges. It falls to the school to take on a large measure of this considerable responsibility. Schools cannot be expected to solve the world's problems, but schools must play a pivotal educational role in the equal preparation of all students for active and informed citizenship, if those problems are to be solved.

Since the task of educating for an uncertain, difficult and foreboding future must be fundamentally different than the education of the past, it follows that the theory that guides and informs such an education must also be different than the theories that guided the education of the past.

2. A general theory based on clear and specific democratic principles is preferable to existing and proposed theories.

We support a high level explanatory general theory, but not any general theory. We believe only a specific general theory- democratic education- has the capability to guide education into the next century. Democratic education has four interconnecting requirements: a specific orientation to,

- (1) curriculum that is organised as knowledge that is inclusive -ie, made universally available, and is designed to solve problems that students have been persuaded are important.
- (2) significant participation in decisions that affect students lives,
- (3) the guarantee of specifically designated rights, and responsibilities,
- (4) equal encouragement to success in all of the school's activities (Pearl, 1988).

Each of these four areas needs very specific description and defense. Such description and defense is beyond the scope of this paper but is provided in Pearl & Knight, A General Theory for a Democratic School. Hampton Press, N.J. (to be published 1996). But to give a sense of what a general theory must contain we briefly and incompletely summarize our understanding of a general theory in the following paragraphs.

Knowledge in the democratic classroom.

Curriculum is the reason for schools. Everyone believes schools should be places where for students important learning takes place. The consensus unravels on the definition of important. Democratic education comes into play both in the definition of important knowledge and in the procedures used to arrive at the definition. The most important knowledge is that which enables every student to

be an enlightened citizen. The development of an enlightened citizen should be what distinguishes the public school from the private school and is what justifies it. Only as citizens are all students equal. And only as equal citizens can they share in the responsibility of solving problems.

Knowledge in a democratic classroom is useful! Students are given reasons to believe that what they learn in school is needed to solve the problems that they recognize need solving. The problems are both personal and social. In a democratic classroom there is balance between the personal and the social. Teachers take pains to explain why that balance is necessary. Personal problems cannot be solved if the environment becomes unlivable, or if a social world is destabilized to such an extent that fear of victimization prevents normal social interactions, or if the economy is unable to generate a sufficient number of good jobs for everyone, or if persons are denied access to jobs, housing or social recognition because of race, ethnicity, class or gender. Conversely, social problems cannot be solved by persons overwhelmed by personal problems.

In a democratic classroom preparing students to deal responsibly with important problems takes the form of ecological analysis. The problem is presented as an interaction between the individual and the environment. The solution to the problem requires both individual adaptation and socially responsible actions on the environment.

A democratic curriculum recognizes humans are by nature an environmentally altering, interdependent species. The challenge is to find ways to collectively agree on alterations of the environment that both sustain livability while producing and distributing resources in a just manner, i.e., striving to create a world in which every inhabitant can enjoy a useful and gratifying life without negatively affecting the environment. That is a daunting challenge. It will not be perfectly met. But, if it is not presented as the background for all educational problem solving, the results are very likely to be disastrous.

Since neither God nor science can decree important knowledge (Barber, 1983), knowledge can only become important when it is recognized as such by "everyone." And a strain to consensus can occur only when everyone is involved in the debate over that definition. And while students must be a part of that debate, the debate only becomes productive when students learn how to make a persuasive case for importance. While such a process will not lead to unanimous agreement it should lead to considerable progress in such a direction. The process should continue until the agreement reached is near enough to a consensus to bring a shared sense of legitimacy to a classroom activity. The process should be extensive enough to convince even those who dispute the decision that they were given the opportunity to fully participate in the debate. Establishing a procedure whereby the importance of knowledge can be assessed, while complex and confusing, is also immensely rewarding. Education moves from the humdrum to the exciting. Students are elevated from regurgitators to inventors and discoverers.

Since knowledge in a democratic classroom is not stored for future utility and is utilized daily, the utilization contributes to its constant reformation AND to its validation. Such an approach to knowledge can succeed only when there is appreciation of conflict. The accumulation of important knowledge will not occur if the authority overwhelms the student, nor will it occur if debate is truncated prior to a serious and thorough search for a generally acceptable conclusion. Differences should not be allowed to remain unresolved simply because neither time nor effort was expended to reach an agreement. From a democratic perspective when there is no sustained effort to resolve differences, all diverse opinions are equally valid. It is only after all parties have agreed at the outset to strain for shared understanding and have committed themselves to both present carefully reasoned proposals and to listen to carefully reasoned rejoinders, is it possible to come to a temporary understanding of important knowledge.

Types of problems to be solved in a democratic classroom.

Race is one area that begs for democratic treatment. It is our failure to examine race relations in a broad social context that has led to ever increasing and violent racial antagonism, and a similar lack of analysis results in continued aggression against women. It is our failure to develop an analysis that includes both environmental and economic considerations that has led to a livelihood (employment) versus livability (a healthy environment) mentality to the detriment of both a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

Race issues, gender issues, the environment and the economy cannot be treated adequately unless these are placed in the context of student preparation for an existing although rapidly changing work world. Discussions about race, gender, the environment and economics become exercises in sophistry unless the distribution of work and its availability plays a central role in that discussion.

On one hand the education about work must demystify the existing and projected work world so that every student can make an informed choice for a future occupation. On the other hand the student has to be provided with information and helped to develop an analysis that would inspire every student to participate in the invention of an economy, and more narrowly a work world, that has the potential to provide everyone with employment that is fair (equally accessible to all), safe and gratifying.

The problems to be solved by the developed knowledge are both social and personal. Although the problems in a democratic classroom are ones which students help select, it is crucial that teachers play a leading role in suggesting and directing students to solve the most pressing of existing social problems--e.g. poverty, violence, crime, environmental destruction, deteriorating race relations, resolving differences in definitions of morality and establishing a civil society. Personal problems to be solved by student generated knowledge would include: substance abuse, unsafe sexual practices and finding, holding and advancing in employment.

The intent of the democratic classroom is to be inclusive. Differences are celebrated, but the democratic classroom works to the extent that there is a shared center. Schools have attempted to address diversity with multicultural education. While heralded as innovative and significant reform, it has hardly been that. In fact, multicultural education has done little to bring about an understanding of diversity and the dynamics of a deeply divided and hierarchical society; it has managed to fuel a spirited and sometimes ugly opposition. As currently implemented, multicultural education is insufficiently attractive to alter entrenched belief systems. It is superficial, static, very careful, and not organized to solve any problem. It is not oriented to creating a "culture" to which all belong. Multicultural education is a very thin veneer applied to a society that is rapidly unraveling.

Crucial to the survival of the species will be our ability to develop a democratic culture. One need look no further than Somalia, the once Yugoslavia, the once USSR, the treatment of immigrants in the UK or Germany, aboriginals in Australia, and almost any inner city in the US, to see the future if we fail to construct a centripetal center that has as its intent the drawing everyone to it. The success in pulling diversity to the center will, of course, be the determining measure. All can be part of the determination of whether we are coming more and more together, or are drawing more and more apart?

Excluding popular culture from the classroom is missed opportunity. We agree with Farber et al (1994) that school should "tune in" to that culture (those cultures) but for very different reasons. Farber, et al are intrigued by the different texts and form of expressions of popular culture and want to invest scholarly attention on them; whereas our primary interest is in examining popular culture for what is not in it. We analyze popular culture for its potentiality in preparing youth for leadership in the world that is too much with them. We side with James Baldwin that the popular cultures that have entrapped youth are "fantasies that have nothing to do with reality" (Baldwin 1963). We note that James Baldwin gave his talk to teachers in 1963. If given today he would have taken note of how much sicker those who have created popular culture have become, and how much further removed from reality.

What Willis (1990) calls "Common Culture" or "lived culture" cannot be dismissed or underemphasized. It is a critical part of young people's lives. It is, however, far from common. Youth cultures are as widely divided from each other as they are from adult authority driven cultures. And while youth lived cultures are important statements, it also must be recognized and communicated that these are inadequate cultures.

Teachers need to recognize and to interpret to students the notion that these lived cultures of youth reflect the despair, the disarray, and the felt helplessness of passengers on a rudderless ship bucketing on a rolling sea. Willis makes a concerted effort to promote positive qualities of youth cultures. We find this analysis unconvincing but we also recognize that youth cultures are important for

youth and therefore, unreal and perhaps even destructive, these cultures should be an integral part of the curriculum.

It is the claim of cable television representatives that cable is the embodiment of democracy, because every group (and maybe in time every individual) has a channel of its (or his or her) own. Which is not exactly what Virginia Woolf meant by A Room of One's Own. From our perspective cable television is the farthest thing from democracy. The dismembering of society, the dispersing of each splinter to its own self-sealed enclave, cannot produce democracy. It can only move in the opposite direction. When splintered, no group is large enough to influence the mass, and choice is limited to consumption. None of the powerless groups can produce much of anything, certainly nothing of substance. Each "culture" is held captive by ever larger and less accountable corporate enterprises. No longer is there any effort to produce for felt need. With the development of a consumer society, production comes first followed by a campaign to create a want. Which is exactly what happened with "multicultural education" with one important distinction; there has not been much of a campaign to create the want.

Participation in the democratic classroom.

Democratic citizenship skills are those attributes that facilitate involvement with others in ways designed to generate action for the betterment of the community. Such skills are explicitly and unashamedly political, where politics means arriving at a decision under conditions of conflict. Democratic politics differs from the politics that students eschew with a passion in its commitment to careful preparation for decision making. For democratic politics to occur each democratic citizen is given equal opportunity to become skilled in formulating coherent arguments; skilled in marshalling evidence to support an argument; skilled in effectively communicating with a wide range of others; skilled in hearing what a wide range of others are saying; skilled in disagreeing without being disagreeable; skilled in straining to establish a common ground upon which differences can be negotiated; skilled in devising with others a plan of action; skilled in the undertaking of specifically designated activities that are necessary for implementation of the plan; and skilled in reflecting on the effectiveness of the action.

Democratic skills are developed through school created opportunities for practice. Students are put into situations where they can influence and be influenced by other students. Unlike current approaches to political participation, in preparation for democratic citizenship everyone is encouraged to be a leader and everyone is given ample opportunity to lead. In a democratic classroom citizenship skills are learned through a combination of student government, community service and cooperative learning projects.

Students learn to become responsible democratic citizens by engaging in citizenship activities. Not all citizenship activities involve government, but

government establishes the boundaries for citizenship. Even those who are most anti-government must use the agencies of government to express their opposition. To teach citizenship, classrooms are organized as governments. In the classroom students learn the rudiments about citizenship and associated responsibilities. In a democratic classroom students practice every component of democratic citizenship. They learn to debate issues and support proposals with logic and evidence. They participate in the decisions that affect their lives. They learn what rights are, and where these rights end through the exercise of rights, and by participating in discussions about their definition and responsibilities.

Critical for citizenship development is establishing the classroom as an experiment in government. Students in such an experiment should be able to experience, role play, various forms of government and be challenged to create new forms. Students should experiment with various early "democracies" with represent-ative government, where some in class are given the right to vote while others are denied that right. Various justifications can be developed to deny the vote, e.g., grades in prior class-rooms, failure to conform to dictates of good citizenship (disciplinary actions such as suspensions or detentions), or race or gender, or color of eyes. Each of these restrictions should be discussed and reference to history here is essential. Through the study of a focused history, students will learn that government at every stage of history was an unstable compromise of competing forces and constituencies.

School government is a logical place to learn citizenship. Student government in a democratic classroom, unlike existing approaches to student government, is real. In the democratic classrooms students make important decisions. One area of important decision making is fiscal. A democratic student government controls a defined budget. This is a necessary condition, since the primary responsibility of modern governments is raising and spending money. Student government makes critical decisions over how a budget is spent. The student government is permitted to make "mistakes." Reflecting on mistakes teaches accountability. In the process students learn about zero-sum choices. Spending money for one activity means that something else will not be funded. Student governments should also be involved in the fund raising aspect of government. Student governments in a democratic classroom "tax" their constituents. The government has to deal with tax resistance and legal challenges. Student governments debate and experiment with various approaches to tax collection. All of the approaches to fund-raising are problematic. All can be defended by some form of logic and all have a history that can be studied and brought to discussion and meaningful debate. To add depth to the debate, local 'experts' that divide along the political continuum can be consultants to the process. And finally as part of the process of citizen preparation the discussions that take place in arriving at school government decisions can be generalized to the debates of fiscal policies that are taking place in local, state and federal governments. Students should be encouraged to make their opinions known in

these larger debates, in the form of letters, petitions and delegations to different legislative bodies.

Democratic school governments (whether at the classroom, school or larger span of control) have important executive and legislative and judicial responsibilities. The executive function of a student government is to administer a variety of programs, e.g., student excursions, dances, sports days, science and art fairs, safety and security functions, supervision of community services. The legislative function in addition to the aforementioned fiscal responsibilities include establishing the rules that students must live by. The judicial responsibility is to provide due process and determine the consequences for rule infractions.

There are conditions on student government. Student government doesn't just happen. There is a clear logic to its development. And it does not move to the next stage without establishing a powerful case that there is sufficient knowledge and maturity to take on additional responsibility. And at no stage is student government removed from adult supervision and possible remedial intervention. What is important is that from the very beginning students are aware of what it takes to advance to the a higher stage of political responsibility, AND, the specific acts of nonfeasance (not performing an accepted student government responsibility), misfeasance (activity that is improper by a student government representative that would not be improper if done by anyone else) and malfeasance (misconduct or wrongdoing by student government representatives) then would require an intervention by adult authority. Students also have negotiated in advance the nature of adult authority intervention for specific infractions. In matters of extreme urgency, school authorities can call a state of emergency and abolish student government for a period of time with the understanding that intrusion by school officials in student government has a chilling effect on student government. Any school authority intervention into student government must become part of the learning experience, inspiring reflection and opportunity for students to rectify the conditions that led to problems.

Student government is developmental.(Knight, 1985) In the first few years of school the student becomes acquainted with rational order. During these years the teacher is in charge. The teacher at this stage establishes the rules of a political process and explains why they are to be used in the classroom. Students receive instruction in democratic practice in the form of role-playing. They serve as judges, legislators, and executives. Through simulation, the very young develop a sense of the parameters of democracy. By the the fourth grade students experiment with representative government. During these years students are randomly assigned to governmental functions. In this phase the student begins to recognize that freedom carries with it responsibility. Every child is given the opportunity to serve as: legislator and make the rules; judge and jury to deliberate what should be done with rule violators, and executive to assume

responsibility for class activities. Through random selection all students are initiated into government functions. The teacher in this phase moves from the decision-maker to an active participant in deliberation. The teacher refers students to sources; directs student attention to possible consequences.

Students in middle school are prepared to experiment with elections. They nominate candidates, campaign, and vote. Students should have developed at this stage of their lives, a sense of: 1) the kind of laws that are useful in controlling behavior, 2) the treatment law-violators should receive, and 3) appropriate governmental services. The responsibilities of student government should include an advisory influence on curriculum and teacher recruitment. The teacher's role at this level changes perceptively from the authority in the class-room to a person who monitors and analyzes authority. The teacher at this stage clearly enunciates in advance the latitudes of control which are available to the student. The major function of the teacher is to return to the student for reconsideration actions that are internally inconsistent, violate individual student rights, or are proscribed by law.

By high school students should have matured to where they can have significant influence in the running of the classroom and the school. Their rights, as well as their responsibilities, have been clearly established. And teachers and other adults function primarily as technical assistants and consultants. (adapted from Pearl, 1972).

Logic would seem to dictate that the longer a student goes to school the more that student will participate in decisions that affect his or her life. Currently, the opposite is the case, the farther a student goes in school the less voice the student has. (Knight and Lewis, 1993) And further, as students advance in school the more the teacher is opposed to student participation in important school decisions-choice over classes, determination of school rules, enforcement of those rules, participation in the hiring and firing of teachers and administrators, or in the evaluation of teachers and administrators, a voice in the design of curriculum, etc

That a powerful an restructured student government can have a powerful positive influence on alienated "at risk" youth is convincingly described by Charles Hollins who had been recruited to the Oregon Upward Bound Program that we helped design and administer. Hollins not only graduated from the University and went on to achieve an advanced degree, he insisted that a major factor in his academic success and the academic success of so many of his similarly situated fellow students was the student government that gave to them real power in decisions that affected their lives (Hollins, 1991).

Preparing for democratic citizenship through community service.

Benjamin Barber makes a powerful case for community service as a means(he actually comes closer to insisting it is THE means) for developing necessary

citizenship competence. It is his belief that through a well designed community service program is the antidote to the "mistrust, cynicism, disappointment, and bitterness (that) currently weigh(s) down our institutional relations, turning pedagogical allies into enemy camps of faculty, students, and administrators (Barber, 1992, p. 230). He argues that "civic education" is an integral part of a liberal arts education and even more importantly liberty depends on the teaching of citizenship. Barber's main thesis is that service to the community is a duty and, furthermore, such service is an absolute necessity for the maintenance of freedom. Moreover, this nexus between education and community service was once understood as vital for citizenship preparation. We find Barber's argument for community service persuasive. We differ only that we believe that community service is but one means by which students are prepared for democratic citizenship. He limits his analysis to the university. That is a worry. Citizenship preparation cannot be restricted to the advantaged. Every one of the principles that undergird the Rutgers program apply equally if not more powerfully to high school and even elementary school students. In Bay View Elementary School in Santa Cruz, community service is a required activity for 6th grade students who provide services to the homeless, to seniors, tutor younger students, become involved with environmental cleanup, etc. Community service, like student government, should be developmental with students taking on more demanding assignments as they become more experienced and mature. Similar programs are found in Melbourne schools (Holdsworth, 1996)

There is yet another important difference in our understanding and Barber's. His proposal for community service is appended to an otherwise unchanged educational system. Community service is an added requirement for graduation. The other requirements remain as courses to be completed. We believe that adding community service to the existing system is probably necessary as a transitional tactic, but in its vision we feel it is too limiting.

For community service to work in our scheme of preparation for democratic citizenship, it would be included as a part of a problem solving curriculum. It would be linked to student government (student government could be one of the community services) and would utilize (as Barber suggests) cooperative learning. Unless envisioned as part of an reconstructed educational system- a system which meets democratic requirements, it is unlikely community service will adequately address the lamentable condition of democracy in the postmodern world.

Preparing for democratic citizenship through cooperative learning.

The ability to work cooperatively is a requirement for democratic citizenship. Without cooperative projects it becomes impossible to establish any legitimate common ground or shared understanding from which benefits can be derived from diversity. The very essence of the concept of community requires

people working together in various cooperative ventures. There can be no democratic citizenship without cooperative relationships. Therefore if schools seriously accept the goal of preparation for democratic citizenship, not only must ample opportunities be created for cooperative activities, but the nature of the cooperation must be organized developmentally from simple structured games in the elementary grades to ever more complex and challenging tasks as the student nears graduation. Cooperativeness is not a simple mono-dimensional trait. Cooperation varies considerably by task, by size of group by the nature of the problem and by the composition of the group. Cooperation is not a universal good. Nor is it synonymous with democracy. Cooperation is entirely compatible with authoritarianism. In the Nurenberg Trials, cooperation with the Nazis constituted crimes against humanity. Most sports activities are currently organized as very finely tuned cooperative activities governed by authoritarian principles. Our concern is not with cooperative learning per se, but with the specific contribution cooperative learning has made to democratic citizenship. Most of the highly structured cooperative learning lessons or games do little for democratic citizenship other than introduce students to cooperation. Supporters of cooperative education show that some approaches appear to produce significantly higher levels of academic performance across a wide range of "subjects" than individual approaches (Slaven 1989; Davidson, 1985; Newman & Thompson 1987). The gains are sufficiently impressive, although somewhat inconsistent, that we are persuaded that student learning teams in the existing schools would make the classroom less deadly and would produce higher tests scores on the required curriculum. We are not convinced that cooperative learning as currently practiced will do much to prepare students for democratic citizenship, although we do believe that the techniques designed by leaders in the field (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1986; Kagan, 1989; Slavin, 1989) provide an excellent tactic to introduce the topic of the demands of citizenship.

Cooperative learning can assist students to master a number of different roles, e.g., leader, facilitator, recorder, all of which are required in the performance of democratic citizenship. Working in groups does facilitate the development of a broad range of social skills, and to the extent that the groups are diverse by ethnicity and assumed intellectual capacity these experiences are also generalizable to democratic citizenship activities.

In an essential element of democratic citizenship, interracial relationships, cooperative learning has made a substantial contribution to preparation for democratic citizenship and as discussed a bit later is a necessary component for equal encouragement (Hansell & Slavin, 1981; Slavin & Oickle, 1981; Weigel, Wiser & Cook, 1975). However, while cooperative education is essential in the development of a democratic citizen, its importance should not be overstated. In fact, if other changes are not made in classroom, the gains made by cooperative education will be overwhelmed by the negative aspects of existing school practices.

For cooperative education to be a significant factor in democratic education and for it to fully prepare the student for democratic citizenship, greater emphasis must be given to the quality of cooperation and its direct applicability to democratic requirements (knowledge for important problem solving, universal and equal participation in decisions, rights, and equal encouragement). Cooperative education cannot be used as a pretext for the negation of individual rights. A student's right not to be forced to participate in cooperative education has to be respected. Nor should it be permissible for students to cooperate to gain advantage for some at the expense of others. It is just as important for student to learn where cooperation is inappropriate as it is for them to learn how to cooperate.

Rights in the Democratic Classroom.

In a democratic classroom students enter with established rights and then learn to be responsible. Rights are both an important knowledge issue and something to be honored and exercised in classroom. In the authoritarian classroom rights are linked to responsibility with only the responsible granted rights. Denying rights to the "irresponsible" contributes unnecessarily to classroom disruption and inequitable treatment of students

Instruction in rights begins with definition. Only unabridged activities that does not restrict the activity of others can qualify as a right. One person's freedom of expression does not prevent another from also expressing him-or-herself. Respecting one person's privacy does not invade another's privacy. Due process for one does not come at the expense of the due process of another. Rights, by this definition, must be extremely few in number. Only four rights have stood the test of time. these are: (1)- the right of free expression (2)- the right of privacy (3)-the right to specific kind of due process (4)-the right not to be a captive audience.

1) **Rights of expression** are those guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution - Freedom of expression is no settled matter in public schools. It is not a settled matter in any aspect of public life. Still unresolved are student rights to: express orally unpopular opinions in class or elsewhere on school grounds, the right to symbolically express an opinion through dress, the right to criticize adult authority in student newspapers, and the right to peacefully assemble to express dissent.

As important as it is to define and defend student rights as a necessary ingredient of a democratic school, it is equally important to be able to define where those rights end. The right of expression has never included libel, slander, or the use of expression to deliberately endanger others. The boundaries of permissible expression are not easily or immutably established. That boundary will be more defensibly established when students debate and reflect on all the arguments. Democracy is not served when adult authority arbitrarily determine what is permissible student expression and what is not. Students must be

encouraged to state opinions. It is essential that criticism of adult authority, teachers or administration, not be suppressed. Such criticism can and should be answered by adult authority not squelched by it. It is an imperative that students in no way be threatened or punished for disagreeing with the adult authority. Ridicule or otherwise exploiting the advantage of position has to be viewed as suppression of a right. In a democratic classroom student newspapers are not censored. Students right to petition and to assemble are also respected. In fact, free speech areas should be created in every school as well as opportunities to debate significant issues.

In a democratic education libel, slander and "fighting words" - the use of racial epithets, sexual harassment and verbally abuse because of sexual preference - are taken seriously. Action to suppress such expression is given serious consideration and is debated thoroughly. Only an extraordinary situation can justify suspension of the right of expression. Not only should such suppression be rare, but it also must be recognized that whenever it happens the right to freedom of expression is seriously threatened.

Is conversing in a language other than English covered by rights of expression? Of course! The language a person uses does more than communicate information to others, language also expresses identity and loyalty. All oppressed people develop secret codes that they use to communicate to kindred others without revealing matters believe to be shared in private with distrusted others. That is why so many adolescents speak in an argot that their parents and other old fogies cannot understand. Any effort to suppress in school the language spoken at home is a violation of a student's rights of expression. To be democratic, teachers and other officials need to find persuasive reasons for students to become fluent in English without requiring them to surrender fluency in a mother tongue. If students resist learning English, school officials should look for oppressive conditions that lessen the desire for students to learn English.

2) Rights of Privacy. The word "privacy" may not appear in the United States Constitution but it is nonetheless a widely recognized value in society at large and among school children. Somewhat surprising "privacy" gained the recognized stature as a right under a conservative Supreme Court. It gained acceptance perhaps because it is a "middle class" right, perhaps because it has been a slowly evolving right, perhaps because intrusion into privacy is increasingly prevalent and more destructive, and perhaps because of increased recognition of the validity of different life styles.

Roe v. Wade, the critical decision on abortion, established the modern definition of right of privacy -i.e., the existence of an area of private life into which government cannot pry. It must be remembered that the Constitution was created by men devoted to liberty but opposed to equality. They believed humans to be selfish and untrustworthy controlled only by a good constitution (Hofstadter, 1948). In fact, the idea of democracy is consciously not part of their thinking. As suffrage was extended so too was the concern for privacy. Privacy

was an important protection for the emerging labor movement, populism, feminism, the still very vulnerable ex-slaves and socialists, anarchists and other political radicals.

Public school students more so than any other population are vulnerable to the excesses of authority. The student concern for privacy includes the right to personal life, security of one's lockers or desks against unreasonable searches and seizures, and protection of confidentiality, e.g., recognition of the privacy of grades, of personal difficulties problems, and of school records. As protection of privacy school authorities must take the responsibility to forcefully bring to student's attention the negative impact of gossip.

Students have never had much legal guarantees of privacy. In recent years the Supreme Court has ruled that school principals can search student lockers without the same warrants required of police officers. In democratic education, privacy is an important consideration.

3) **Due Process.** The Bill of Rights reflected a great concern for due process. The 4th through 8th amendments were designed to reduce the power of established authority in the area of criminal justice. The colonists had been forced to suffer uncontrolled police power and they didn't like it. And in the Bill of rights they did something about it. In five amendments they provided: protection against search and seizure (4th Amendment, also important as a right of privacy); prevention of a trial unless there was a reasonable charge, prevention of double jeopardy through retrial after an acquittal, protection against being forced to testify against oneself (5th Amendment, also important for privacy), a speedy public trial, an impartial jury, access to knowledge about the charges and the right to counsel (6th Amendment), further protection of the trial (7th amendment), no cruel or unusual punishments (8th Amendment).

All of these amendments are designed for one goal. The establishment of a system of "fairness." While the founding fathers were not much for equality in general, there was one area where equality was very important to them and that was equal treatment before the law. Distrustful as they were of democracy and universal suffrage and as committed as they were to class hierarchy they were also firm believers in fairness. Equality to them was equal rights of defense when brought before the bar.

It is the lack of perceived fairness that produces so much alienation and anger. Students have long before been turned off to school in their encounters with a "justice system" that comes under the general rubric of "discipline." Students experience twelve years of schooling without any serious opportunity to appreciate the reasoning behind the logic for limitation of police powers that are inherent in the Bill of Rights.

4) **Right not to be a captive audience.** The right not to be held captive does not appear in the Bill of Rights. How could it, since slavery was permissible in the new nation, as was indentured servitude. And because women had neither voting rights or access to the workplace, they too often were in effect captives. It

wasn't until the nation was almost 100 years old that slavery was abolished. However, long after slaves were freed from captivity, compulsory education laws were passed. By 1918 every state had a compulsory education law. It is now the case that the only place where someone can be sentenced to without first committing a crime is school. Compulsory education is by its nature coercive. However, there is a solid reason for students to be required to be at school because uninformed citizens cannot make reasoned choices on critical social issues. Democracy requires an informed citizenry, which means the citizen must be well educated. But to compel a student to become well educated is undemocratic. We have here, a large sized dilemma. How do we resolve it in a democratic classroom?

With compulsory education it is absolutely essential that the classroom become a place where ALL students want to be. The right not to be a captive requires an examination of policies that punish for latecoming and absenteeism. In a democratic school it is far more important to determine why it is that students are unable or unwilling to participate in a class activity and act to change those ungratifying conditions, then it is to try to bludgeon them back to the classroom. If the school cannot make a persuasive case that what is being taught is worth learning it is difficult to defend that idea that students must be in a classroom.

One reasonable approach to democratizing compulsory education is to increase the number of choices that students have in school.(even while recognizing this era of budget cuts and teacher retrenchments) No student should be required to remain in a situation that s/he does not find gratifying. In a democratic classrooms students exercise choice over teachers, classes and schools, Students claims of unfair treatment have to be taken seriously. Choice can be very difficult for schools. Some classes, schools and teachers will be much more popular than others. But because it is difficult, it is not impossible. If on the basis of increased choice some classes and some schools become undersubscribed, i.e., very few students want to be there, it is incumbent on the school system to take necessary action to either change the class or do something with the teacher. Those classes and schools have to be made more attractive. i.e., be places where all students want to attend.

There is a necessary relationship between rights and responsibilities. Without responsibilities there can be no rights. The conservative position is that rights are bestowed with clear understanding that duties are attached. This, they claim, is a conclusion drawn from natural law and established tradition. Our position is rights precede responsibilities because they are easier to define than responsibilities. That would not be true if we were indeed, "one nation indivisible, under God, with liberty and justice for all." But we are not and never have been. Our pledge must be perceived as a commitment to a goal yet to be reached. The only way that we can possible generate a defensible and credible set of duties is to first establish the ground rules for debate. Those ground rules

can only be "individual rights." It is only after everyone's rights are guaranteed can there be the debate necessary to define responsibilities. Rights precede responsibilities because democratic education is founded in tradition, not mired in it.

It is nonsensical to consider student rights and not discuss the rights of teachers. Teachers and students have identical rights. To provide rights to teachers and not to students would place students in the vulnerable position so many now feel. However, student rights without teacher rights makes instruction impossible. Rights protect both from bullies.

Equal encouragement in the democratic classroom.

The most difficult aspect of a democratic education to put into effect is equal encouragement. The deeply embedded belief in inherent inequality in both lay and scientific thought raises the question of whether equal encouragement is a feasible project. The ever increasing insistence, almost obsession, of individuals to gain a competitive advantage in a "winner take all" (Pearlstein, 1995) society, raises the question of whether equal encouragement is a desirable project. Democratic education ultimately has to make a persuasive case for both feasibility and desirability.

Belief in a student's inability to achieve in school, which is an attribution of some kind of deficit, precludes equal encouragement. Once a student is believed to be intellectually inferior that student does not receive the same encouragement as a student believed to be academically superior. We do not take the position that all students are capable of identical educational achievement. We do believe that it is impossible to determine what a student is capable of learning unless the student is given every encouragement to learn. A variety of studies demonstrate that alleged 'incapable' students performed far beyond expectations when encouraged to succeed (Edmonds, 1979; Hollins, 1992; Meier 1995; Pearl, 1972).

Deficit thinking has a long history. Some form of it has been embraced by the entire spectrum of political and philosophical thought. The attributed deficits can be genetic, cultural, personality or stem from environmental deprivation. They share a common characteristic, all deficit thinking "blames the victim" (Ryan, 1971) and directs attention away from the conditions of education.

There is ample evidence that students do not receive similar encouragements. Race, class, gender, ethnicity have influenced the nature of education. Some of the differences are obvious. The education one receives differs significantly by the money spent on the student (Kozol, 1991). Different encouragement comes in the form of assignment to learning tracks or streams (Oakes, 1985). We believe that deficit thinking is even more powerfully expressed in the treatment students receive in the classroom.. In fact we believe that differential encouragements students receive within a class "explains" much if not all of the differences in educational achievement by race, class, ethnicity or gender.

Difference', Similarity and Equal Encouragement.

In the intense effort to define and celebrate differences, similarity in humans has been largely overlooked. Yet in many ways all human beings strive for similar fulfillments. These fulfillments have not been made equally available. In the following paragraphs we briefly discuss nine universal desires, indicate how they have been unequally made available and conclude with some indications of what happens when effort is made to equally encourage in these areas.

1. Security

No one disputes the importance of security to the individual and to the society. It is the primary justification for governments spending-- hundreds of billions of dollars for "national security," about the same for "social security." In school, security, in addition to providing a safe environment, means willingness to risk. Equal encouragement is equally encouraging all students to take risks, to make mistakes and learn from them. Very early in school life, those who have attributed deficits learn that they should not risk because the costs of risking far outweigh the benefits. Willingness to risk is one attribute that distinguishes the achiever from the non-achiever. We believe that willingness to risk is less a personality attribute than it is part of the social environment. Teachers very early in a school career communicate clearly who will be punished for risking and who will be given encouragement to risk. A democratic classroom encourages all students equally to risk. Students who have been fearful and insecure can blossom when encouraged to risk (Hollins, 1991; Meier, 1995).

2. Comfort (Relief from Unnecessary Pain)

In school, unnecessary pain takes the form of humiliation, boredom and loneliness. Virtually no student is spared from some unnecessary pain, but for the "deficient," humiliation, boredom and loneliness typify their school days. They are assigned to less stimulating classes (Oakes, 1985; 1992) and are routinely embarrassed publicly and isolated. The inflicted pain, explains latecoming and absenteeism far more parsimoniously than attributed deficits. Teachers and administrators are not the only ones who inflict unnecessary pain. Students do it to each other. Bullying, harassment, name-calling are all part of the existing school culture. However, students inflicting pain on students does not absolve the teacher from altering that situation. Drawing attention to the process, generating projects that address the situation, actively engaging in team building, individual counseling and continuously consulting with students and keeping a record of putdowns, etc, all help develop a new culture. In the democratic classroom conscious effort is made to eliminate unnecessary pain, and to ensure that necessary pain is distributed equally.

3. Competence.

Robert White (1959) constructed a theory of personality based on the human need to be competent. It is a theory that passes the test of common

sense--people do those things that they do well and try to avoid activities where they feel incompetent. In every arena of life we are quick to attach the label incompetent on great numbers of people and then we are surprised when they lose interest in their assigned responsibilities. Denying people the opportunity to be competent at work, politics, school, health, etc. does not end the matter. If people are unable to be competent in actions approved by legitimate authority they will find places and activities where their competence is recognized.

Burglars brag of their ability to pick locks, drug dealers of their ability to elude police, school clowns on their talent to irritate teachers, etc. Competence in school is measured by evaluated performance, i.e., grades. Students learn very quickly who are the considered competent and who are dismissed as incompetents. It is through this system of grading that a meritocracy is supposedly established. But grades are far less a measure of competence than a means to encourage and discourage. Competence will be universally attained when all students are encouraged equally to competence, when competence is equally recognized and when students who are having difficulty are encouraged to build on the competences they have.

In school, competence is attached to relevance. It is difficult to encourage students to be competent in matters that they believe are insignificant. Students will strive to be competent when the knowledge and skill they are developing is organized for important problem solving. Students with alleged deficits when encouraged to competence respond accordingly (Edmonds, 1984; Hollins, 1991; Meier, 1995).

4. Belonging.

Ours is a society that systematically includes and excludes. In an earlier time family, neighborhood, union, church and fraternal order provided psychological centering and opportunity for psychological investment in a society that was inequitable and blatantly unfair. Much of that is lost. The "existential vacuum" noticed by so many is partially the result of technological takeover of community. Passive reception has replaced active participation. So much of life is centrifugal- and impersonal. Belonging is a vital human need. Humans hunger for companionship. They are terrified in isolation. Schools have always included and excluded. Exclusion from welcomed membership in school does not terminate student desire for belonging. Students with "deficits" will search for belonging outside of school sanctioned activities. They will join cliques, gangs, etc., and they will demonstrate their affiliation by dress, music, language, designatin of "turf," defining behaviors, shared values and other indicators of a "common culture". (Willis, 1990; Knight, 1996) These groups become references for acceptable and unacceptable behavior and in time rob established authority of its legitimacy. In a democratic classroom all students are made equally welcome and effort is made to make the classroom an inclusive community.

5. Meaning.

Meaning is insufficiently understood in our society. Meaning in school has two quite separate intentions. Students need to understand what is expected of them and they need to know that what they are learning makes existential sense. Those with "deficits" tend to be denied both meanings - they rarely understand what they are supposed to do, and they rarely understand the value of what is to be learned. In a democratic classroom all students receive equal justifications of the lesson and demystification of how the lesson is to be learned.

6. Usefulness.

Uselessness is a dreadful condition. Enforced uselessness is cruel punishment. Usefulness is choice in providing a service and choice in accepting it. Usefulness is meaningful problem solving in school rather than mindless drill and alleged preparation for a dubious and murky future. For those saddled with deficits school offers little in the way of usefulness. In fact, there is no place where they feel less useful. They rarely are allowed the gratifications the achieving students gets when she or he is a tutor, or when she or he represents the school in academic decathlon, etc. The student with "deficits" is denied the gratification of seeing future utility in school. He or she is not encouraged to perceive the school as a way station to some future good place. In a democratic classroom opportunities are created to be useful (community service, meaningful cooperative learning projects, student government responsibilities, etc) and all students are given equal access to usefulness.

7. Hope.

A few decades ago, at least in the United States, it would have been unnecessary to include hope as an unmet human need. It sprang eternal, it was the essence of our national character and was manifest everywhere. We largely believed with Franklin Roosevelt that "the only thing we had to fear was fear itself." Hopelessness today comes at us from many sources. Pessimism is reflected in opinion polls and loss of confidence in one's ability to influence one's future. Pessimism is the one common characteristic in modern American life-middle class and poor, Black and White alike fear the American dream is not for them (Morin, 1995). Students who have been designated with deficits have little to be hopeful about.

In a democratic classroom all students are provided reasons to be hopeful. Problems are organized with possible solutions in mind. Students are encouraged to be problem solvers, rather than be overwhelmed by the problems they have.

8. Excitement.

Excitement is a legitimate need. We believe it is an important contributor to deviance and other mischief making. Classrooms can be exciting if students are encouraged to participate in activities where they generate knowledge and make important discoveries. The opportunity for such excitement needs to be extended to those now denied- those with "deficits."

9. Creativity.

Humans are, by nature, a creative species. Each generation creates a new world. School officials arbitrarily establish limits on creativity, insisting that only a privileged few have the capacity to be creative. Creativity is in a certain sense undefinable. There are no acceptable criteria for creativity and often it goes unrecognized. Creativity should not be defined solely by school recognized accomplishment, or by an even more capricious criterion, assessed capacity to be creative. Both "standards" for creativity are powerfully correlated with race, ethnicity and parental economic condition. The way schools are currently constructed, adult authority decides who can be creative and how that creativity is to be expressed. Those who are characterized as limited by deficits are not permitted outlets for creativity, or, the perceptions of them are so overpowering, their creativity goes unrecognized. Those with "deficits" are not uncreative. Unfortunately, when the creativity of those with labeled "deficits" are not allowed in school sanctioned activities, the denied often find creative fulfillment in proscribed activities. They are creative in ways in which they torment teachers, do graffiti and get involved in complex illegal activities. In a democratic class all students are encouraged to be constructively creative and to use creativity in community building, i.e., to make the class a far more interesting, exciting and creative place than is currently the case; and, far more interesting, exciting and creative than any of the proposed highly advertised "reforms."

Conscious effort to equalize encouragement has produced rather remarkable results (Hollins, 1991). How much of alleged deficits would disappear if all student were equally encouraged can only be determined at the classroom level. It is only at the classroom level can it be established that there has been equal encouragement, and only after equal encouragement has been demonstrated is it possible to calculate the effect of such an intervention.

The classroom becomes important for yet a another reason. With widespread pessimism, with the prevailing desire for competitive advantage and with some transmogrified definitions of democracy (Dahl, 1956; Polsby, 1963; Truman, 1951) as balancing of interest groups, it is only at the classroom level that it will be possible to find support for equal encouragement. It is only at that level can the debate between the benefits of an equal encouragement community be compared with a dog eat dog competitive society.

The teacher in the democratic classroom.

In many ways democratic teaching is easier than traditional teaching. Many restrictions are removed. The class is not organized with teachers in an adversarial relationship with students. The teacher does not have to possess all the knowledge or enforce all the rules. The teacher, however, is much more than a facilitator of classroom discussions. The teacher is a leader. The teacher proposes and models democratic citizenship. The teacher is a gyroscope pulling

diverse elements toward the middle. The teacher reminds students of the requirements of a democratic class- knowledge to solve the problem the class is working on, everyone equally participating in class decisions, everyone entitled to the identical rights (and what those rights are), and everyone equally encouraged to success in the classroom.

The democratic teacher works collaboratively with other teachers and encourages students to do the same. A democratic teacher can fall along the entire spectrum of political opinion, and is free to express his or her views with the stipulation that the class is forewarned about the teacher's political orientation. The teacher takes pains to insure the class receives balanced treatment on any issue by inviting differing viewpoints into the class or debating other teachers on a particular issue.

A democratic teacher needs to know a lot. Koerner (1963) and the spate of more recent critics of teaching are on safe ground in their claim that teacher education programs do not provide future teachers with sufficient knowledge to be competent in the classroom. Koerner and other conservative critics are not on safe ground when they define the knowledge a teacher should have. It is not sufficient for teachers to be only competent in "subjects." Future teachers must be given the opportunity to learn how the subjects they teach can be used to solve important personal and social problems. But knowledge in a teacher preparation program is not restricted to academics. Teachers must also be knowledgeable about citizenship arts, how to make a democratic education work, how to coherently fashion cooperative learning. The need to be taught how to stimulate students to move from passive to active learners and to stimulate a thirst for knowledge. A classroom teacher is familiar with the students lived or common culture (Willis, 1990) and this culture is to be introduced and analyzed in classroom by elementary and secondary students. A democratic teacher is knowledgeable about the world and is able to make a powerful case for the relevance of school based instruction to the issues that students confront daily outside of school. Teachers need know how to enlist an array of community supports. And lastly the teacher must know the the child s/he is teaching. The teacher must have in place a working theory of development that guides not only instruction but also the reflection when things do not work out as planned.

A democratic teacher does not need to be the class expert. It is far more important that a teacher in a democratic class perceive him or herself as a life-long learner and in many instances becomes a discoverer and inventor of knowledge at the same time students do. In the democratic classroom teachers work cooperatively with students and in that relationship it is as important for the teacher to inform the students what she or he doesn't know as it is to share with students what they do know.

Discipline in the democratic classroom.

Discipline in a democratic classroom is largely a curriculum issue. (Slee, 1995) It is a problem that the class solves applying knowledge, universal participation, due process and equal encouragement to the solution. The purposes of discipline will be to help the class accomplish its agreed upon goals. Discipline in the democratic classroom is a far cry from the much used "Assertive Discipline" (Canter & Canter, 1976) which meets none of our democratic requirements. The Cantors insist that their system derives from an insistence on "basic" student and teacher rights. "Every student has the right to a learning environment that is free from disruption" (Canter, 1988, p. 59) as well as the right to expect appropriate behavior from students (Charles, 1989, p. 107). And teachers have the right to expect support from parents and administrators (Canter, 1988, p. 60). None of Canter's "rights" meet the definition of a right. They could be, under appropriate circumstances, educational responsibilities but only if students were first guaranteed their rights. Providing the right of teachers to expect backing from parents in effect is a conspiracy against the rights of students. Such a "right" prejudices a situation and assume the absence of legitimate student grievances against the teacher. In fact, Cantor's "rights" obscure the denial of defensible "rights" - due process, privacy, right not to be a captive audience and due process. It is in the denial of rights that despite the insistence of Canter that its major thrust is rewarding students when they are good (Canter, 1988) that makes "Assertive Discipline" undemocratic, brutal and ultimately unworkable. Assertive Discipline is a logical occurrence when efforts to solve problems are implemented in the absence of a general theory.

Discipline in a democratic classroom also differs widely from the Glasser and the Dreikers approaches both of which make claims to be democratic. Prior to 1985 Glasser's approach was patently authoritarian. His system was designed to coerce students into obeying the rules, although he did suggest that students contribute to the creation of the rules (which is a necessary component in a democracy). In his 1985 work, Control theory in the classroom, he acknowledges that students must have good reasons to obey rules; "... no more than half of our secondary school students are willing to make an effort to learn, and therefore cannot be taught" (Glasser, 1985, p. 3). This revelation meant that for successful discipline secondary school must become "a place where almost all students believe that if they do some work, they will be able to satisfy their needs enough so that it makes sense to keep trying" (1985, p. 15). He list four essential needs to be satisfied: belonging, power, freedom and fun. At superficial glance Glasser's needs bear close resemblance to the gratifications that we identify as necessary for equal encouragement. This correspondence in thinking appears even stronger since he defines power as not power over others but as competence. His need for freedom is vaguely connected to a student right to movement. The resemblance breaks down because of what is not present in in Glasser's thinking. His grasp of

democracy is inadequate. And he has not thought much about education other than trying to maintain control. A general theory of education does not begin with discipline, nor is discipline a critical component of that theory.

A similar problem lies with Dreikers (1968; 1982 [Grunwald & Pepper]). He defines his approach as democratic and more than Glasser elucidates his understanding of democratic education. It is a theory informed by group dynamist Kurt Lewin (1948). It is a theory that largely limits democracy to teacher leadership. To Dreikers the democratic leader is neither permissive or autocratic. That is an insufficient definition of democratic. It is an insufficient definition of a teacher in a democratic classroom. Dreikers' democratic teacher is sensitive, caring and non-intrusive, but that is not enough to help students become enlightened democratic citizens.. The democratic elements in Dreikers' thinking is restricted to classroom process. There is virtually no consideration of outcomes. Education is not perceived as means to definable ends. That is less a criticism of Dreikers than it is recognition of the importance of a general theory that informs all of education. A theory that centers on discipline trivializes both education and theory.

The Administrator in the democratic classroom.

A democratic education does not eliminate the necessity of administration. School have necessary functions that go beyond student teacher relationships. The school connects with other governmental bodies. It is responsive to public political pressures. It is restricted by law. Decisions have to be made that transcend the day to day workings of the classroom. Administration in democratic schools reverses the understanding of accountability. In current systems accountability is directed upward. the student is accountable to the teacher; the teacher to the administrator. In the democratic classroom, accountability is directed downward-the administrator to teacher, parent and student.

In the interim period, while democratic education is tested classroom by classroom the administrator serves as mediator. S/he meets both traditional accountability functions AND is as accountable downward as law and policy allow. It is a difficult role to play. But it is doubtful if classrooms testing a general democratic education theory will survive without such administration. The willingness of an administrator to play such an uncomfortable role will largely determine which classrooms will be used to begin the test of democratic education.

Research and evaluation in the democratic classroom.

To paraphrase Immanuel Kant, 'social change without democratic theory is blind and democratic theory without change is empty.' Current approaches to research are both empty and blind. Empty in that no important question is being asked, blind because the results lead to no important new directions.

Research is systematic means to provide firm answers to specific questions. The systematic means requires: a specified and precisely defined means for data collection, a set of procedures for presentation of that data, and a defensible logic for interpretation of the findings. What has been called the scientific method has been a set of ritualized procedures for each of the above. The slavish adherence to procedure removes the researcher from responsibility for the findings and gives to the results the aura of "science." The effort to apply science to education has led to the a warped phrasing of questions and to a biased and sometimes useless production of "answers."

Democratic research is not an isolated or isolating process designed by remote abstract researchers. It is directed towards a problem that has been identified by a democratic process. The problem emerges out of the challenges individuals face in communities confronting institutions. Students are active participants in framing questions and in the provisions of answers. Democratic research is not reserved for a restricted elite.

In a democratic approach to research it is assumed that data never speak and the critical dimension is interpretation. Interpretation can only be persuasive when debate from all sides are encouraged. In the absence of independent ground, i.e., science, knowledge emerges as a debate between different formulations. The resolution of this debate only can claim to be as firm as knowledge when the widest diversity of opinion is included.

Research on capacity to learn, innate intelligence (IQ), and differences in intelligence by race, ethnicity and social class has been informed by detached "science." It is on the basis of such research that claims are made that African Americans and children of poverty are constitutionally less capable of learning than are white and economically advantaged populations. The people who have made these claims all come from advantaged populations. When a spokesperson from a population deemed to be disproportionately unintelligent, challenges those conclusions, that person's findings are dismissed without anything resembling a debate. The important issue here is not whether the research of intelligence has been good or bad science, but whether it would ever be possible to scientifically determine intelligence by means in which the data collection, the presentation of findings and the interpretation is all done by a privileged elite at the expense of those studied. Our argument with those who have studied IQ is not that they are bad scientists but that such an issue can not be adequately studied by any undemocratic method no matter how careful or sophisticated the investigation. In place of declarations delivered from Olympian heights there needs to be debate and negotiation with everyone affected participating. Every aspect of the problem of intelligence - its expression, its effects, its generalizability, etc. - needed to be debated with differences in understanding negotiated. In place of scientific dictum defended on some unchallengeable independent ground, an understanding needs to be reached that everything about intelligence is determined through an overtly political process. This is what currently happens,

with one important difference, in current practice every effort is made to camouflage the politics which means there is no attempt to make a manifestly political decision democratic.

Traditional research not only fails to provide adequate answers to pressing problems, it is an intellectually lazy way to attack a problem. Ritual rather than thought underlies the process. Democratic research requires an active intelligence. The argument needs to be held together by logic. If data are unable to speak then the democratic educator must make an eloquent defense for a conclusion. Evidence in democratic oriented research is not suffocated by research orthodoxy. Evidence can be any observation as long as the conditions of observation are fully explicated. If observations lack reliability, validity, representativeness, etc. that will be discovered in the debate. If debate is encouraged and everyone has equal access to data none of the scandals associated with IQ will occur. It is the effort to maintain the impossibility of detached objective science that created the scandals.

Evaluation.

Evaluation is systematic judgment about performance. The methodology of research has developed canons, techniques and principles while there is much debate about evaluation methodologies as to its specificity (Wolf 1990). Democratic evaluation is a subset of democratic research. Negotiation is central to any discussion of evaluation. There must be agreement between the teacher and students. There must be prior agreement concerning the content and process of the evaluation.

Both democratic evaluation and research rely on a methodology that is generated by all persons concerned. Evaluation covers a wide territory. Student performance is evaluated but so too are different educational programs. One recent reform is authentic assessment developed by Grant Wiggins (1989; 1991). Authentic assessment replaces piecemeal and often meaningless tests and unaccountable teacher created evaluation with samples of student performance, e.g., portfolios. It is preferable to what currently exists, and what is called authentic assessment would be a part of the democratic classroom evaluation-but only a small part. Much more important is the process by which education goals are selected and the negotiated means by which these goals will be assessed.

What makes a general democratic education theory preferable to what currently exists?

"Educational theory" comes in all sizes and shapes. There are "theories" of knowledge, "theories" of development, "theories" of learning and cognition, "theories" of instruction, "theories" of classroom management, and "theories" of organization. What passes for theory in most classrooms is a mish mash of an of the above. There is often little correspondence between the theory of knowledge and the theory of instruction or discipline, or for that matter between any theory and classroom activity. The more education has been subjected to attack the more

it has abandoned coherent theory. The theoretical dispute in the area of knowledge has been contested by essentialism, perennialism, open schooling and social reconstruction. The "basics" as important knowledge. The term given to an education limited to basic information is:

1. Essentialism.

Essentialism emerged in the 1930s as a reaction to progressivism (Bagley, 1938), regained momentum in the 1950s and 60s (Bestor, 1953; 1955), and was reestablished as "Back to Basics" during the 1970s and remains as such in the present. It is a strong movement in Australia, U.K, and the U.S. It is a no frills, practical approach to education. It is both conservative and authoritarian in its approach to knowledge. Important knowledge is that which essentialists insist every child must know to be able to function adequately in society. Essentialists organize knowledge by subjects. Essentialism informs the report published by the Commission appointed by President Reagan (National Commission, 1983), and 'Schools of The Future', (Department of Educational Services, 1994 Melbourne). The basic subjects that essentialism calls for are reading, writing and mathematics in the elementary schools and English, mathematics, history, geography, society, science, foreign languages, physical education and the arts in the secondary schools (Down, 1977), other subjects (Strands and Key Learning Areas-K.L.A's.) are added to the 1990s version. Each strand contains major subject content and processes, connected to each key learning area. This is basically a framework model of curriculum design. It draws from two streams of curriculum theory, one, the classical tradition (perennialism) with an emphasis on content, subject areas, instruction and assessment procedures; two, what has been described by Hargreaves as the cultural restoration model defined as a form of new progressivism. The function is to process strong subject based boundaries.

Essentialists require students to master certain facts and skills, they are not much interested in ideas. Essentialism is as much defined by what does not happen in schools as by what does happen. Essentialists insist: that there is a limit to what schools can be expected to accomplish- and attempting more than schools can realistically be expected to do only leads to a decline in standards and student performance. Thus, essentialists insist that broader social issues should not be addressed in schools, nor should schools try to influence the conditions and situations many students find themselves in. Essentialists believe that other agencies have the responsibility to treat living conditions, sexual practices and psychological growth and that schools should be limited to teaching the basics and attempt little else. Teachers should teach only what s/he is authorized to teach, and students should demonstrate that they have learned what the teacher has taught by regurgitation and by performance on tests that meet rigidly defined standards.

Essentialism makes little effort to meet any of our four requirements of a democratic education. Knowledge is not organized to prepare the student to solve

any important problem. Where there is a form of problem solving in subject areas it is for the most part in the abstract, unconnected to real issues. There is no effort to involve students in any decision that would affect their lives (in fact, it is such education that essentialists denounce). The importance of students' rights are minimized and there has been no serious examination of the possible inequity of such a system. Equal education from an essentialist perspective, is teaching everyone the same subject in precisely the same way and using precisely the identical standard to evaluate the performance of every student. While essentialists do not meet our requirements of democracy, they claim essentialism is compatible with democracy since they insist that mastery of the basics is the sole defensible prerequisite for democratic citizenship. Requiring more, according to essentialists constitutes either indoctrination or intrusion in areas where education does not belong. From an essentialist view the deterioration of school standards coupled with a lack of emphasis on basic skills has produced functional illiterates and thus has threatened democracy. It is our contention that an essentialist education has created functional illiterates and thus has threatened democracy. It has deadened what should be a lively enterprise.

The "great works" as important knowledge. The term given to an education limited to "great works" is:

2. Perennialism.

Perennialism, like essentialism, is conservative and authoritarian in its approach to knowledge. To perennialists the goal of education is to help students know "truth." They believe that all important truth is contained in the great works of culture, The Western Canon (Bloom, 1994) that have stood the test of time. Truth to perennialists is unchanging and that is what makes it "perennial."

.... Cognition cannot proceed without memory, and the Canon is the true art of memory, the authentic foundation for cultural thinking. Most simply, the Canon is Plato and Shakespeare; it is the image of the individual thinking, whether it be Socrates thinking through his own dying, or Hamlet contemplating that undiscovered country. Mortality joins memory in the consciousness of reality-testing that the Canon induces. By its very nature, the Western Canon will never close, but it cannot be forced open by our current cheerleaders. Strength alone can open it up, the strength of a Freud or a Kafka, persistent in their cognitive negotiations. (Bloom, 1994, p 35).

Students are encouraged to delve deeply into the great works, to savour them, and discuss and reflect upon them. Perennialist schooling involves ideas more than the accumulation of skills or facts. The appeal is to cognition. To perennialists, lack of student interest or complaints about subject relevance is itself irrelevant and schools should not pamper whiners or dilute subjects to

appease complainers. The student is encouraged to be an active learner of a curriculum that is rigidly structured and unamendable.

Perennialists do not try to meet requirements of democratic education. They make no effort to organize knowledge for problem solving. Students are not included in the decision-making, students are not granted rights nor is there much interest in equality. Inequality, after all is one of the truths that has stood the test of time. Nonetheless, important leaders among the perennialists insist that perennialism is consistent with democracy (Adler, 1982; Hutchins, 1936). Their argument: every student should receive a perennialist education and thus all will be given the opportunity to learn the great truths out of which democracy emerged and the solutions to all of our present problems can be found. Carole Pateman (1985a; 1985b) among others are not impressed by that argument. They see the "great works" as justification for oppression in general and women in particular.

In practice perennialism has been the education for the elite, while essentialism has been restricted to the non-tertiary bound students. This allocation is one of the means by which social reproduction has been maintained. Self awareness as important knowledge. There are many terms given to an education limited to defining important knowledge as limited to awareness of self ie,

4.Existentialism, romantic humanism and open education are among the categories most often used. Existentialism or romantic humanism is child centered education. The knowledge of this approach to education is that which facilitates individual growth. In essence each student chooses what it is he or she wants to learn, or put another way, what each learner finds to be true for him or her. The primary knowledge is self discovery. The most noted proponents of such education have been Abraham Maslow (1958; 1971), A. S. Neill (1961) and Carl Rogers (1969).

To begin, (existential education)... rules out three conventional notions, that education is primarily, an agency of society, set up to perpetuate a cultural heritage; that it a pipeline of perennial truths; and that it is a means for adjusting the young to life in a democratic community. In place of these, let education exist for the individual. Let it teach him to live as his own nature bids him, spontaneously and authentically.

George F. Kneller, 1961, p. 428

Child centered education claims to be democratic. The primary defence of that claim is the authoritarian nature of what it opposes- essentialism and perennialism. The democracy that is supported by such an approach is one that features negative freedom, the removal of restriction on the individual. It is what Barber (1983) calls soft democracy and fails to meet critical elements in our

definition of democratic education. There is no effort to develop a body of knowledge that equips every student to solve critical social problems. And while students do make decisions that affect their lives, these are individual decisions. Community is a significant feature of an 'open school' but the community is restricted to those who share the philosophy. Carl Rogers' T-groups supposedly develops sensitivity to other individuals, but that is as far as it went. The establishment of a larger than individual entity that has been created by a community of diverse individuals struggling to discover or invent a common ground, and to which there is allegiance (i.e., a recognition that a voluntary surrendering of a portion of self is essential for a common good) is not something emphasized in an education which turns its attention inward and whose mission is self-discovery. Rights are emphasized in existential education, but there is no balancing of rights with responsibilities. It is assumed that a self-actualized person will be responsible, but the nature of that responsibility is neither specified, nor is there any effort to determine precisely what that responsibility should be. Furthermore, the issue of equality is never seriously embraced. It is accepted as self-evident that a self-actualized person is a good person, and good people are not racist, sexist or otherwise prejudiced. And if everyone was educated to full self development, everyone would be good, there would be no prejudice and we would live then in a society dedicated to equality (as well as peace, justice, etc.). Such a definition of equality is too broad to be useful in a world where institutional practices are organized to perpetuate inequities, and only organized efforts designed to produce institutional change can solve pressing social problems or produce an equal encouragement society. In essence, the growth of self-centered education coincided with the emergence of an ego-centered society and has contributed significantly to the inordinate selfishness that a democratic education attempts to change. It is the attitude of the "me" generation, far more than organized conservative thought that has led to the political paralysis that a democratic education seeks to remedy.

Learning how to create a better world as important knowledge. The term given to an education designed to create a better society is:

4.Social Reconstruction.

The goal of social reconstruction is to give students the knowledge necessary to change society. It emerged through the work of George Counts during the depression of the 1930s, the period of the Great Depression. Prompted by a society sinking in seemingly insoluble economic difficulty and enmeshed in rapidly growing social problems resistant to traditional treatment, he challenged professional educators to serve as agents of social change and address inherent inequalities and problems. He encouraged the schools to ally with Labour, women, farmers, and minority groups in his most famous work, Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order? (1932), Counts criticized Dewey and other "progressive" educators for failing to generate a theory of social welfare. He

maintained that the "child-centered" approach was inadequate to ensure the necessary skills and knowledge of an education fitting to the twentieth century.

Marxists and critical theorists have made similar appeals for social reconstruction since the depression (Apple, 1979; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). Social reconstruction theorists do not meet our definition of democratic education. In a democratic education neither teachers nor students are directed to the type of future society to be created. A democratic school does not choose sides and thus bias knowledge. Its goal is not to dare to change society. Its goal is to prepare students to provide leadership for inevitable change, by organizing the curriculum so that students can participate in the debate over direction of change. In a democratic classroom students become aware of conflicting arguments and the logic and evidence that support different proposals. It is the responsibility of democratic teachers to insure balance by bringing to the classroom the range of different positions on a particular topic. Students should be as much encouraged to be conservative as they are to be liberal or radical. The quality of education is not the determined by the direction the debate takes, but by the quality of the debate- the extent to which students learn to marshal evidence and build coherent cases for different positions and proposals. The role of the teacher is to challenge all positions. (whether that means that overtly racist and sexist arguments are given credence in a classroom is treated in depth in associated work that deals with rights, particularly the right of expression and the limitations to such a right. (Pearl & Knight, 1996).

Summarizing the case for democratic education. A powerful argument against conservative education is found within its structured authoritarianism. It makes little sense to claim to prepare students for democratic citizenship while denying them any opportunity to practice democracy. What Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay attributed to politicians is even more true for educators be they theorists or practitioners.

Many politicians of our time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition, that no people ought to be free till they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story, who resolved not to go into the water till he had learnt to swim. If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery, they may indeed wait forever. (Macaulay, 1825).

Failure to achieve its own very circumscribed educational goals and its logical inconsistencies are less powerful criticisms of authoritarian education than student resistance to it. Here indeed we find truth in a paraphrased old saying- one can coerce a student to a classroom but you can't make him or her think. At an earlier time it might have been possible to coerce students to education, although this was always marginally successful and only worked for some of the

students. Authoritarianism is no longer possible. Authoritarianism not only drives students from school, but in that process undermines the credibility of the authority and this contributes significantly to high incidence of drug use, irresponsible sexual activity, violence, hours wasted transfixed before the television and the development of a culture that not only does not connect with schools but is actively antagonistic to it (Willis, 1990). The resistance to education is not only a problem for education, it is a greater problem for society. Students who resist education are not prepared to solve the problems they will necessarily face and they also resist accepting any responsibility for those problems.

Liberal approaches to education as reflected in existentialism also fail to prepare students for emerging societal and personal problems, although the reason for failure is just the opposite to the problems posed by authoritarian education. Child centered education fails because it is incorrectly directed and does not generate strong or appropriate adult leadership. Such education is not resisted by students, but the education they receive does not provide them with the knowledge necessary to adequately confront either personal or social challenges. Because "liberal" teachers do not attempt persuasive leadership, there is no more acceptance of responsibility for societal problems in students subjected to that kind of teaching than there is in students who have been exposed to an authoritarian education. The disinterest in politics is if anything more encouraged in liberal classrooms than in conservative classrooms. Furthermore, liberal education provides no moral position to guide students in drug use, sexual relationships, violence, etc. Although the goal of liberal education is personal development there is no evidence that the permissiveness of a "child-centered" education has led to more development, particularly in the ability to resist substance abuse or to establish mutual respect in interpersonal relationships. The argument that Counts made against progressivism more than half a century ago applies to current student-centred education. In fact, a "child-centered" approach is even more inadequate now in providing necessary skills and knowledge to meet the challenges of the 21st century than it was when it failed to meet the much less difficult challenges of the 20th century.

The theory that undergirds democratic education is logically coherent. Students in our experience do not resist it and from it they develop the knowledge to solve complex problems. A major responsibility of tomorrow's education will be to "reconnect or even restructure the future with the past" and thereby help young people create the future. For this to happen learning rich environments must be created and students organized to interact in non-authoritarian patterns with educators, peers, various community leaders who serve as resource persons, and with other learning resources inside and outside the learning institutions to reach mutually accepted social as well as personal goals (Dalin, 1994; Beane, 1995, pp. 616-622). Such an education will require new and fundamentally different alliances at both institutional and personal

levels, and new kinds of non-coercive learning contracts between the learner and authorities.

Limited experiments in democratic education appear to demonstrate both its desirability and feasibility. Much more experimentation is necessary, but for the moment it is sufficient to recognize that current conservative and liberal approaches do not work. The record of their failure is undeniable, and as a result youth problems grow and societal problems remain unsolved. In such a situation, democratic education, at least in theory, deserves careful consideration.

3. Educational theory needs to be developed and tested from the ground up.

Grand narratives have not plagued education, top down initiated moves to reform education has. There are two major reasons such initiatives are meaningless. First, the experts who designed them were conceptually confused. Education to them is a jumble of concepts. And this is as much true for the liberal or radical proposed reforms as it is for the more recent conservative ones. Secondly, the top down initiatives will be necessarily resisted and sabotaged, (not always consciously) by those that work in the classroom.

No better example of the meaninglessness of theory-less top down exalted exercises can be found than the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1995) report of the elementary schools in the United States. This report, one of the largest studies ever undertaken and three years in the making, concluded that too many elementary schools used class time poorly, are isolated from their communities and do not teach language skills or promote civic virtues enough. To bring school back on track a simple alternative to the "reform-of-the-month" that have "created a lot of confusion" - "The Basic School" - is recommended. A "Basic School" creates strong ties to parents and neighborhood leaders; enlarges the responsibility of teachers; emphasizes reading and language skills; brings more flexibility to the class to promote creative learning; integrates subjects; and promotes honesty, compassion and respect for others. To make sure that this new educational smorgasbord is complete, it rounds up the usual group of palliatives: schools (no more than 500 students per elementary school); reduced class sizes (no more than 20 students per class); bilingualism (more stress on Spanish); technological upscaling (one computer per five students and a television and videotape player in every classroom). Why Carnegie left out the partridge in the pear tree we likely will never know.

The critical submerged message in the report is that since we have no idea where you are going, best slow down. That would make a modicum of sense, if the world was willing to do the same. Not recognized by the authors of this report, or by Ernest Boyer, the former Commissioner of Education and current President of the Carnegie Foundation, was the futility of trying to reform education without guiding theory. The problem with elementary schools was not that they were trying to move too fast with a "Reform-of-the-Month." The problem was that they

were rudderless. As Boyer allows, and we agree, the lack of direction causes less 'perceptible' harm in elementary schools than it does in middle schools and high school. Insufficiently recognized is the lack of comprehensive and coherent theory in elementary school paves the way to the calamitous events noted in later grades.

None of the Carnegie recommendations are necessarily wrong, or harmful. All of the recommendations, (parental and neighborhood involvement; greater opportunity for teachers to exercise leadership; sustained student investment in reading and other uses of language; more classroom flexibility and the promotion of creative learning; integrating subjects; and developing a shared values system that includes honesty, compassion and respect for others), will be found in a democratic classroom. As will increased use of technology, and smaller classrooms. But not as unconnected bits and pieces, nor as mantras or slogans. Each element of the democratic classroom derives logically from a theory of education that has clear purposes and principles and is an analyzed response to the problems that have been encountered in the classroom. It makes no sense to intensify reading instruction in the elementary school without attending to the resistance encountered to reading in high school. Developing a shared values that includes honesty, compassion and respect for others cannot happen by fiat, nor will such qualities emerge through exhortation. Those values develop as part of a general theory dedicated to resurrection of community.

It is sad that Carnegie pays no attention to Carnegie. In 1990 the same foundation issued a report on campus life in the United States and the same Ernest Boyer provided the preface for that report (Carnegie, 1990). In 1990, Carnegie found increased tension on university campuses generated by deeply rooted prejudices. (Incidentally, these tensions have increased markedly in the past half decade). Moreover the report noted "the breakdown of civility on campus." (p. 2). The proposal for redress was the creation of an open, just and fair, disciplined, caring and celebrative community. Celebrative meant rituals "affirming both tradition and change are widely shared (p. 55)." The 1990 Carnegie report addresses reality to a far greater extent than does the 1995 report. The 1990 report brings to surface serious growing problems, although in both reports, solutions are weak and platitudinous. The diagnosis of a university in the first report is equally applicable to the high school. In both, the notion of community may be inapplicable where "fragmentation of knowledge, narrow departmentalism, and an intense vocationalism...are the strongest characteristics of (the) education (p. 63)." A problem for all levels of education is that the surrounding area is also losing a sense of community with people more and more imprisoned in a private realm. None of this negates the necessity of a common infrastructure. A balance can be struck between individual interests and communal concerns. But that balance can only occur when there is movement in such a direction and when that movement is informed by a coherent theory that encompasses both.

An open, just and fair, caring and celebrative community cannot be created in the absence of a conscious effort to make that an educational goal. And that goal cannot be attained unless it is reflected in the curriculum, the decision-making process, the security to participate that can only be provided by specified guaranteed rights and when the community is organized to provide equal encouragement to all its residents. In other words, for there to be a common and inclusive infrastructure there must be a theory that is consistent with such a goal.

Ball (1993) dissects the destruction to education by right wing top down edicts that have dictated education "reform" in Great Britain to an extent beyond anything attempted in this century. He describes the effect on three curricular area: music, geography and history. In each, cultural restorationists-the-hardline old humanists of the New Right- have exerted an exceedingly powerful influence, although the takeover has not been smooth or necessarily decisive. We share with Ball his indictment of a music curriculum that has no place for performance and limits instruction to the appreciation of classics; a backward turn to simplified and fragmented geography; and a history that glories British accomplishments. What Ball also needs to consider in his analysis is the reason why these efforts are destined to fail. They will not be viewed by students as personally or socially meaningful and over time be overwhelmed by student resistance. The classics can be force fed to students but that does not mean that they will be appreciated or even become part of short term memory. Simplified geography won't be learned. A glorified British history can have transient success and help make a short term easily won Falklands campaign popular enough to elect a conservative politician, but such education will not sustain a popular following in something akin to a Vietnam War. Nor will it develop the characteristics needed by informed citizens. Where Ball becomes unpersuasive is when the only alternatives to the hard line right wing takeover he can find are top down liberal alternatives of music that includes an emphasis on performance, an integrative geography and a history that reveals the oppressiveness of British empire at least to the extent it is glorified. Students will resist the well rounded academic's effort to create curriculum with the same ferocity they resist the hardliners. Ball's more desirable alternatives are just as inadequate as that which he rightfully condemns. And that is as much true in the liberal efforts made by the Labor Party in Victoria (Australia) and all of the foundation inspired liberal efforts in the United States among which Carnegie has been in the forefront.

The State of California has issued a series of guidelines, It's Elementary (California Department of Education 1994), Caught in the Middle (California Department of Education 1987), Second to None (California Department of Education 1992). Each were products of task forces consisting of state bureaucrats, school administrators, teachers, academics, and business leaders. The curriculum and the organization draws on research findings and everything in it seems to make marvellous sense. Active rather than passive learning, integrative and

thematic curriculum, celebration of diversity, authentic assessment, utilization of the findings from "brain" research. A remarkable grab bag of seemingly worthwhile ideas uninformed by anything resembling a theory. Though gussied up, it was the old world yet. The curriculum, although struggling for interdisciplinary connections still was stuck with subjects. Problems were recognized but there was no commitment to involve students in a search for solutions.

The four requirements of a democratic education integrated by a general theory - knowledge organized for problem solving, participation in decision making, rights and equal encouragement- are muddled in the California guidelines. What needs to be emphasized is that these guidelines were delivered from on high and while they were for a time rather warmly embraced, (until targeted by right wing 'reformers'), they represented no major departure from ongoing practice.

4. The classroom, not remote governmental centers or research institutes is where important educational change occurs. It is important that very specific examples of theoretically driven education be cited to empower the drive for educational change. One of the problems of a top down approach to education is that its effects can only be presented in exceedingly abstract and general terms.

Education has meaning when it addresses significant events in identified individual lives and the community of which he or she is a part. What needs to be determined is the change in life circumstances in those individuals that can be attributed to education. And only when those changes can be fitted into a general theory is it possible to generalize these effects.

At an earlier time, before massive funding and computerization, it was commonly understood that theory in the social sciences was developed by working close to the roots. Over the years academics have increased the distance between themselves and that which they research; the logical consequence of changes in technology, structure and means by which status and advancement are attained in the academy. In recent years, huge research institutions and/or government funded research, replaced the solitary worker or small team approach and the relevance of the research suffered accordingly. Computers changed the ability to manipulate large amounts of data. Researchers tended to gain status by the size of the project and the ability to bewilder an audience with massive statistical findings on a large number of subjects. All of this has not advanced theory; to the contrary, it has camouflaged the dearth of theory and the emptiness of the social sciences.

Thou shalt not sit with statisticians nor commit a social science,
W.H. Auden

An education organized by a general theory cannot be developed from a distance. It cannot be developed from statistics on a small number of attributes that are ambiguously connected and where small differences can be statistically significant. The only place a general encompassing theory can be developed and tested is in a single classroom. Only then can nonsense masquerading as theory be transcended and only then can an adequate theory overcome resistance and sabotage. Each test provides opportunity for refinement of the theory. But it is necessary to begin small and only when there is reason to believe in a theory's ability to adequately explain the totality of education should it be allowed to grow. How different is that from the widesweeping shortlived fads that have characterized education this past half century.

5. The more ordinary the classroom and undistinguished by special features, the more the useful it will be in testing theory and initiating wide-sweeping change. The closer a proposed school change is to a typical classroom the more likely it will catch hold. Too often in education, it was believed that a special place, a laboratory reduced variables and eliminated distractions. Unfortunately, what was eliminated was what theory had to address. In the test of a general theory there is obligation to define the range of its applicability. The hope of a general theory is general applicability. If, however, in the tests, conditions of applicability are found then its limitations must become part of that theory. For example, if the theory is able to provide predictable results in a classroom of 20 students but not in a classroom with 30 or more students, that is not an indictment of the theory, but the establishment of the conditions of its use. At the present time we can say very little about what theory works where. An adequate test of a general theory requires that it be applied across a wide spectrum of classrooms. The quicker the theory can be tested in regular, normal operating conditions, the quicker it can be determined whether it meets the requirements of a general theory or, if less than that, the limits of its applicability can be specified.

6. Teachers, parent and students have vital roles to play in the development of educational theory. Only a few teachers have been asked to help with theory development. (The few have not been representative of the profession, usually co-opted to design curriculum 'Frameworks') It is safe to say that the dominant posture of teachers throughout history has been anti-intellectual. Teachers have not been interested in theory, nor have they, in general, wanted to become involved with controversy. It is our contention that avoiding theory or controversy in education is no longer possible. It is the recognition of the inevitability of conflict and controversy that leads us to advocate democratic education. Democratic education does not end controversy, to the contrary, democratic education brings controversy into the center and establishes it as a central and necessary feature of the schooling process (Pearl,

1972; 1988; Knight, 1993). But controversy cannot be constructive unless there is a means for resolution and that is where a general theory plays a critical role. The general theory not only provides ground rules for debate, it also establishes criteria to be used to resolve debate.

There cannot be democratic education without teachers playing a significant role in the salient debates. A general theory emerges from a debate in which a wide range of teachers have played leadership roles in both its development and in its implementation. The exclusion of teachers from involvement with theory has had a significant downside. The relegation of teachers to technicians has caused them to become hostile to theory.

'... educational theory and other non-classroom based explanations are excluded from discussions because teachers deem them culturally inadmissible.'

Andy Hargreaves, 1989, pp. 38-39.

Hargreaves argues that teachers reject theory in initial training and forever after (Hargreaves, 1989). We recognize the general validity of that statement. We try to address this issue in several ways. The nature of theory, the manner by which it was developed, and the language with which it is presented has made theory 'culturally admissible'. Teachers need to be drawn toward theory, not repelled by it. Teachers need to be encouraged to participate in the development, refinement and the testing of theory. A theory constructed by remote academics and imposed on teachers should be "culturally inadmissible." In fact, Hargreaves may have it backwards. Because university academics have removed themselves so far from the field of action, their analysis may be so distorted, and their data so irrelevant, that a coherent, adequate, comprehensive and workable formal educational theory may now be "culturally inadmissible" to precisely those who pride themselves on their capacity to build and understand theory. The "cultural inadmissibility" of theory could possibly be found in Hargreaves' suggestion that teachers concerned with moral development consult Kohlberg or Durkheim. We have consulted both and find both irrelevant. Durkheim, no matter how interpreted is woefully inadequate as an informing theory for today's classrooms. Kohlberg's approach to values not only lacks empirical validation but has elitist and possible sexist overtones that we find incompatible with a democratic education (Gilligan, 1980).

Theory construction and strategy of implementation go hand in hand, integrally synthesized into an ongoing dynamic process. The development of theory in which teachers have played an important role identifies teachers who are ready for theory and they, in turn are entrusted with the responsibility to reach more and more teachers. It is primarily through teachers that parents, students and other elements and classes of citizenry who have been excluded

from the debate and the formulation of policy can be drawn into workable educational theory.

Involving teachers in the vital political process of transforming theory from an academic exercise into day to day practice demonstrates one of the requirements of a democratic education,- participation in decisions that affects one's life.

Cultural inadmissibility is reinforced by a systematic denial of parents and students from the decision making process. Parent and students cannot be reduced to objects on which theory is to be tested. They should be part of the theory development team. They should be brought into the discussions about theory, their contributions should be actively sought and taken seriously. At every stage of theory construction and in every area of implementation- curriculum, pedagogy, discipline, assessment, organization and management- unless parents and teachers are political partners in the enterprise, what passes for theory will be "culturally inadmissible" (Knight, 1995). Perhaps it would be more accurate to say, that teachers, parents and students can recognize bad theory and that is what they find culturally inadmissible.

7. Privatization, although presented as the epitome of democracy is not only a poor presentation of democratic education, it is grossly undemocratic and is inadequate as a general theory.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellites has given great impetus to privatization. The market was elevated into a grand theory status applicable to everything. It became in many minds synonymous with democracy. Privatization has resulted in wholesale selling off public enterprises and withdrawal of resources from long established government activities. Government has been presented and to a large extent has been perceived as antithetical to freedom and thus by implication to a democracy. The deconstruction of government has been incorporated into post-modern rhetoric and posturing. The logical extension of this would be the privatized alternative to public monopolized education.

Chubb and Moe (1990) are among the most readily recognized proponents of schools of choice that will result through privatization. Chubb and Moe couch their arguments in attributes normally associated with democracy -choice, empowerment, equality, etc.- and enumerate the benefits that will accrue to both the individual and society once subsidized competing private schools replace a state school monopoly. They also present privatization as protection against the excesses of democracy, arguing that "democratic" control is a game of 'winners' and losers' with 'winners' having their way with the 'losers' and the 'losers' have to pay for it (p.28). Chubb and Moe's democracy and our definition have virtually nothing in common. When Chubb and Moe indict "democratic" state schools, they more than strongly suggest that a significant shift away from winners and losers will occur when the state monopoly is broken. Winning and losing applies to any system with more appetites than there are means to satisfy them. As we show in

the following paragraphs there will be far more losers and far few winners if public education was to be replaced with subsidized private schools.

Chubb and Moe use efficiency and choice to base their support for privatization. It is possible that private schools will be more efficient than any configuration of public schools. However, the case for private school efficiency is neither self-evident nor established by any semblance of evidence (Ball, 1994). Efficiency is an extraordinary elusive concept. Mussolini made the trains run on time, a powerful argument for fascist efficiency; a terrible argument for a justifiable society. Efficiency is meaningless unless attached to clearly articulated and powerfully defended goals. It makes no sense to determine whether private schools or public schools can more efficiently do what should not be done at all. It is in the elevation of efficiency as a standard that the inadequacy of privatization as a general theory is revealed. It is silent where it should be eloquent. Given private sector propensity for advertising, patrons of private schools might be attracted to something very different from what has been offered and so confused so as to not recognize the difference.

Choice. Choice is an important characteristic of democracy. In a democracy citizens exercise choice. And because choice is a key element in a democratic school that claim for increased choice through privatization needs to be carefully examined. Choice in a democracy is broad and interconnected. In democracies, citizens choose their leaders, places and types of residence, modes of transportation, access to public facilities, what they watch on television, and a wide range of goods and services. In a democracy citizens can choose religion and sexual preference. Whether citizens can choose to have abortion in a "democracy" has not been finally settled. Our general theory calls for markedly increasing choice in government sponsored schools.

Choice is a desirable attribute, but with privatized education choice is an illusion. Choice is actually decreased in privatization that has been undertaken in the United Kingdom ('Choice and Diversity' 1992), Victoria, Australia, ('Schools of the Future', 1993), in New Zealand ('Schools of Choice'), in the United States (vouchers or the 'New American Schools Initiative' 1991), Russia, and elsewhere when compared with that which is currently available in state schools.

George Bush, when president of the United States used his office as "bully pulpit" to curry support for privatized choice in education. All he wanted, he said, was for every poor child to be able to choose the same education that his parents had made available to him. The savage cruelty of that remark and the unrealisable expectations it encouraged cannot be overstated. The elite private schools where Bush matriculated--Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and Yale University, where he majored in economics, was captain of the baseball team, and graduated with Phi Beta Kappa honors in 1948--are schools with existing long waiting lists and therefore could not accept voucher students even if they were so inclined. But they are not be so inclined! What gives the schools that George Bush attended their exalted reputations is their exclusiveness. They are

elite because they choose the students and drastically limit admissions. Students are not given the opportunity to choose them. If these schools were made available to everyone they almost assuredly would be similar to the public school they have worked so hard not to be. The elite private school is private enterprise by invitation only. These schools are not established to give competitive advantage to their students. The students come to such schools already are loaded with advantage. These are schools where a certain tradition is inculcated and sustained and a style of leadership ingrained. They have nothing to do with choice.

No one would take seriously the idea that Phillips and Yale or Melbourne Grammar and Melbourne University will become egalitarian. A few untraditional students-a very few untraditional students-may be allowed to enter, but that would be for show and far too few to make significant changes in those schools customs and culture and far too few to have impact on the communities from whence they came. The gist of the argument for choice through privatization is at the next rung down, in the schools with a grand academic tradition, powerful instruction, high standards. These could be the more real alternative to the state school. Many such schools exist in the United States, England and Australia, some religious some secular. But these schools are not unique to the private sector. They not only currently exist, they thrive as state run schools. They, like the well-reputed private schools pride themselves on their selectivity. A Boston Latin, a Bronx School of Science, a Lowell High School in San Francisco, a Melbourne High School in Australia, all maintain exceedingly high standards, rich traditions and outstanding teachers. Remarkably, the state run schools maintain all of their wonderful attributes while encumbered in bureaucracy and saddled with teacher unions. And even more remarkably, these state schools operate at a fraction of the cost of comparable private institutions. At this level public enterprise is far more efficient, if efficiency is measure as output by unit cost than is private enterprise. The high standard state school is far from democratic, but then no one has seriously argued that they intended to be. In both, the high standard public and high standard private schools choice is limited. The highly selective elite state school nonetheless, is more elastic and more accessible than its private counterpart. Both serve the identical purpose. Both exist to provide the highly restricted (and decreasing) number of specialized professions and highly skilled technicians the society needs. Both provide a competitive advantage to students. Thus, such schools are not likely to grow in number or size. From a broad based social policy perspective it makes little sense to generate more highly educated professionals, etc. than a society can absorb (some argue we have already gone too far in that direction). At the level of upwardly mobile individuals, increasing the number of such schools public or private adulterates and dilutes the advantage. Add to all of this, high status schools take time to develop and they are expensive. Choice for improvement of quality cannot be defended either by logic or evidence.

The argument in favour of privatized choice becomes a joke when its allusions are accessing super elite private schools (or some mythical newly created equivalents). Privatization loses its allure when compared with existing high status state schools. Privatization is unmitigated savagery when projected as a lifeline to students wallowing in urban ghettos and similar concentrations of poverty. Nothing could be more cruel or dishonest than to hold up privatization as hope for students stuck in the misery of what slum schools have been allowed to become. The "great equalizer" common school has become a cruel hoax (Kozol, 1991). Sapped of resources, situated in squalor and mired in crime, and guided by educational theories riddled with class, gender, and race biased deficit theses - theories that establish limits on what children in the urban school can be expected to learn- the urban school is a disgrace. Privatization is unwillingness to accept responsibility for the disgrace. None of the real problems of urban education are addressed by privatization. There is no plan to infuse the ghetto, the slum, or poorly resourced populations, with resources to improve the quality of instruction, or guide it with general theory that rigorously meets a criteria of equal encouragement. To the contrary, what is proposed is less than more of the same. Privatization will limit choice because an already under resourced state system will lose funding. If held to arbitrary standards, bankruptcy of private schools will be very high, forcing continual relocation of students. About half of all private ventures succumb in two years, why would private schools be different? If effort is made to keep private schools economically alive by eliminating regulations and standards the abuse of students will be enormous. What is likely to happen is that a few private schools serving a handful of students will produce some at least transient spectacular results. These "successes" will be celebrated in the media while most of the private schools will be at least as bad and probably worse than the state schools they have replaced. Meanwhile public schools will continue to limp along with the majority of the students and that continued failure will be, in turn, celebrated in the media. The successful private schools will be highly selective, not necessarily in admissions, but in deciding which students will be allowed to stay. Because the number of openings in the successful private schools will be pathetically few, parents desperately trying to liberate their children from intolerable conditions will be climbing over neighbors and friends to gain admission to a pathetically few desirable private schools thus destroying what little is left of a community in the process. The kindest thing that can be said about privatization in the ghetto is that it represents one lifeboat for a sinking Titanic. Choice in that situation is selecting whom to save. Privatization is an expensive, brutal, divisive and unnecessary means to "save" a handful of students. Privatization is unnecessary, because successful state school alternatives exist in ghettos and slums as Deborah Meier, among others, has demonstrated as director of Central Park East in New York City from 1974-95 (Meier, 1995). These public alternatives serve more students, are more stable, more readily accessible and are positioned to exert more influence on theory, policy and classroom practice than

private schools have ever been able to do and are likely will ever be able to do. Because the move to privatization has been silent on theory, or more accurately offers privatization as a 'grand narrative', the treatment of students in ghetto or high unemployment communities will be informed, as the most celebrated private alternatives have been informed, by the most retrograde approaches to theory. Privatization not only offers little in the way of real choice, in many ways it threatens existing choices in state schools. Every penny that the state will provide to a private school comes from the state school budget. Which means that as private schools proliferate, public school budgets are reduced accordingly. Public school, even the most underfunded, offer ranges of programs from the traditional academic and vocational tracks, to music theater, drama, specialized science, design, sport, etc. Each reduction not only has a generalized effect on school offerings it has a specific effect on electives. With each reduction choices are eliminated. These choices will not be reclaimed in private alternatives that will per force not only be small but often short-lived.

Privatization, evaluated on its own terms is no panacea and may even be worse than the inadequate system it is trying to replace. It most certainly will not lead to more equity or a 'more perfect union'. We agree with Ball's (1994, p. 126) conclusion

The market works as a class strategy by creating a mechanism which can be exploited by the middle classes as a strategy of reproduction in their search for relative advantage, social advancement and mobility.

We go further, privatization also helps the dominant classes by effectively dividing the dominated and undermine attempts at resurrection of community. Which brings us to an analysis of privatization in the context of our general theory.

Choice in school only fits within a general theory of education consistent with democracy when the choices made in school enhance life choices. It is only when a school choice is consistent with improvement of choice in employment, choice in community and cultural life, choice in meeting interpersonal challenges can value be attached to choice in schooling. It is not merely that privatization is silent in such matters, by implication it speaks volumes. The overriding logic for privatization is choice as competitive advantage. This is a zero sum approach to choice. A person gains a competitive advantage at the expense of another. In the ghetto, the slum, and suburbs of high unemployment, where the total numbers of desirable choices are declining, choices become minus sum. A competitive advantage comes at the expense of more than one other, there are more losers than winners. Choice under those circumstances undermines community. A general theory consistent with democracy would direct students to increase the total number of life chances in the community. A general theory of education organizes students to think critically of zero and minus sum games and consider

the possibilities of a plus sum society where there are more winners than losers. Such a general theory raises to consciousness community development, and directs attention to increases in employment opportunities, a redirection of government priorities, the development of community based culture and community input in the development of appropriate services (which would include education). In that light privatization is more accurately described as an anti-choice alternative to state schools that are already hobbled with too few choices to enhance the condition of life.

When we examine privatization in the light of our four requirements of a democratic education, important knowledge, participations rights and responsibilities, and equal encouragement, what seems weak and inadequate becomes altogether unacceptable. Advocates of privatization have been silent or very conservative when addressing curriculum. Silence about curriculum is not the major problem with privatization. Its major problem is the fragmentation it promotes under the guise of 'choice'. The creation of student enclaves will prohibit the broad exchange necessary for reaching some generally understood conception of important knowledge. Such centrifugalization makes possible the creation of a few 'democratic' private schools. In these schools students would apply themselves to the solution of critical problems.

A central aim of a general theory is to reintroduce debate. That debate is meaningful only with diversity. State schools have and will continue to have far more diversity than private schools, particularly if diversity is understood to include differences in world views. Diversity is the greatest asset the state school has. Because the school operates with an inadequate general theory its greatest asset has become its greatest liability.

The language of privatization projects the student as a consumer of education. From a democratic education perspective, students and parents cannot be reduced to educational consumers. They must be considered to be producers of knowledge. If the student (and/or parent) as consumer is rejected, the argument for a market approach to education totally disintegrates. Students capacity to participate in fractious diverse society will be weakened with privatization. Participation would be reduced to compatible and closed groups. Differences between group would become more and more difficult to resolve.

By opting for the limited right of privatized choice, students in effect surrender all other rights, Each school is free to define rights in its own way. There may be some formal and ritualistic allegiance to the principle of rights but only with a general theory that privatization by definition militates against can there be the kind of instruction and curriculum that would lead to a full understanding and appreciation of rights. Private schools, by definition, are distinguished by their individuality. Each is distinctive by what it does and who it admits. Some private schools will be adamant in their opposition to the notion of rights. Others will restrict the number of rights and limit them to only the most responsible", e. g., the most docile. Others will emphasize rights. It is exactly that

kind of confusion that a general theory attempts to eliminate, not by imposing an official rights dictum, but by inviting everyone into a discussion whose goal is the enunciation of a common understanding of rights and responsibilities.

Equal encouragement is an impossibility in any privatized scheme, no matter how conceived or constituted. Equality under any market defined education is defined as equality as consumers. Even that limited definition can not be met under existing notions of private enterprise. Privatization strives to provide competitive advantage, not equalized opportunity. The rub is that equal encouragement is also exceedingly difficult in state schools. Pressures toward hierarchy not only run deep but are constantly recurring. When we strive to identify entrenched opposition to our general theory, we can expect teachers and administrators to be most adamant in opposition to student rights; (Knight and Lewis, 1993), parents, particularly upwardly mobile parents, to equal encouragement. (Ball, 1995)

8. The more university scholars work as equal status partners and collaborate with teachers, parents and students, and the less they define themselves as outside experts, the more useful they will be in helping develop and test theory,

Good theory and good education practice will develop when university scholars work collaboratively in classrooms with teachers, parents and students. That is not likely to happen quickly, nor will it ever come to pass that all university based educationalists will leave the hallowed halls for the hurly-burly of urban classrooms. A mass migration from the academy to the urban classroom is not necessary. For the university to play a useful role in educational theory and practice, a significant number of scholars need to situate themselves in the classroom and others have to respectfully pay attention to what the field based theoreticians and researchers are doing.

Examples of school-based initiatives: La-Trobe University.

Fifteen years of a Melbourne based staff development and school-based research course has developed sufficient evidence to be an exemplary model of change and examples of teachers as researchers.

Teachers in these models were selected to form task force teams for a period of two years (length of this post graduate course), the course curriculum was a brief worked out in close association with the principal and staff prior to the placement of the team.

The tertiary staff were then largely responsible for designing and teaching a course of academic study which responded to the school brief. The principle task was to institute a dialogue with the all school constituencies over the two years, and generate general theoretical principles into strategies for change within the school.

This was a joint learning situation that actively responded to the needs of a particular school and its community. developing a general theory of education in these settings achieves acceptance from teachers, students and parents and is seen as having more than academic value. (Jones, et al, 1982). 1996 has seen the formation at La-Trobe University (Graduate School of Education) of a four term, school-based, Master of Teaching course based on similar principles. Groups of teachers have been formed to work cooperatively on school-based research and policy implementation. The advantage of both these models is that they are 'ground up' approaches to policy development, with the implementation being done by those responsible for the research and policy formation. This is not a 'steering from a distance' model. One of the strong outcomes from each of these models is the 'in- service' education effect on tertiary based academics. Given the rapid rate of cultural and policy change and the effects on youth and schools, academic staff in these projects received first hand experience of life in contemporary schools. This knowledge and experience then translated into all other aspects of higher degree supervision and teaching (especially for pre-service courses) at university level.

9. The classroom, as distinct from "all" classrooms, or a large array of randomly selected subjects whose performance is contrasted with comparable controls, is where theory is tested. This is in part because a general theory brings local community into its development, in part because only when students play an active role can there be meaning attached to evaluation, and in part because the classroom is a logical place for the restoration of community to begin, and in part because only in a classroom can there be the balance and integration between frameworks and other initiatives and the inclusion of ideas and interests of local communities. Each new classroom test is not only replication but also provides an opportunity for refinement and establishing the limits of applicability.

Using School-Based Initiatives. The individual school site is the place to initiate school reform, not to meet some anarchistic decentering value, nor as an illusion that disguises and facilitates authoritarian centralized control, but as an opportunity to initiate a process that can lead to democratic recentering. Reform has to begin somewhere. There is no conceivable way that the schools we now have will be universally and magically transformed into something fundamentally different. There has to be a strategy for change. Sound models have to be established and nurtured. Where does one start a democratic classroom? Wherever there is interest in one. That is why current talk of decentralization and site planning has potential for democratic reform. We are aware that much of decentralization in the United States has been little more than a mirage (Bimber, 1995). Decentralization, which includes innovations like site-based management and school-based decision making, is based on the assumption that reducing

bureaucratic controls will prompt teachers and principals to exert greater initiative and to tailor instruction to the needs of students. It has failed, not because the premise is flawed but because the true locus of power remains where it has always been- with school boards, central office staffs, and state authorities. (Bimber, 1995). And although, in the four high schools that Bimber studied there was limited breakthroughs and the locus of power remained where it had been, there were nonetheless considerable differences in the way these schools operated. And if he had explored more deeply, he would have found very large differences within each school. Not all teachers taught the same, the same subject was presented differently to different classes of students. It is fascinating to note how much critical theorists, post structuralists, et al, ruminate over difference and never use existing differences to initiate educational reform. The differences within a school are as interesting as the similarities between schools, but are rarely noted in educational research. Bimber(1995) concludes that the main reason for lack of change brought on by moves toward decentralization was organizational or institutional intransigence. The major focus of these analyses was control of resources, not intellectual content.

Having been involved for several decades with efforts to decentralize and bring more management decisions to the site, we too recognize the difficulty, but our conclusions are far different than Bimber's. Decentralization cannot produce significant changes unless the attempted changes are theory driven with policy formation and implementation that is derived from theory owned by those communities. Trying to locate the locus of power is meaningless in the absence of theory. Why would anyone expect that a particular site with all the differences within it, would, when trying to make a site decision be significantly different in its collective understanding of education from those who make decisions at some central location. Minority voices get drowned wherever they are voiced, particularly at a time when thinking about education emanates from central directives, and these directives sound much the same no matter whether they come from London, Washington, DC, or Melbourne, Australia. Furthermore the variables that have been used to critique decentralization may be the least important. Currently budget allocations and assessments tend to be centralized, whereas the critical activities of schooling - the nature of relationships between teachers and students-continues to be decentralized. No central mandate can determine how teachers relate to students, nor can central authority dictate how ideas are taught or how they will be received. The nature of relationship in a classroom constitutes the heart of education and that is where reform can and should begin.

In Great Britain, Ball (1994) reflecting on the move there for decentralization concludes that "the autonomy of schools is more apparent than real." He maintains that a the state "is able to" retain considerable 'steerage' of the goals and process of the education system while (appearing not to do so)" (p.10).

This variation on the mirage argument again reflects lack of leadership and vision at the school site. Ball does allow in the complicated nexus of policy and practice that "policies are incomplete" (p.11). Expressing himself in the language of the postmodernist, he says policy is created in the "trilectic of dominance, resistance, and chaos/freedom" (p. 11). However he does recognize a "third space." It is in that third space where educational change can take place if informed by a general theory. The third space needs more than definition, it needs exploration. Again it is not a matter of 'problemizing', but finding a solution. In Great Britain and Australia as in the United States, moves toward decentralization should be seen as an invitation for exciting innovation. The rhetoric of school autonomy creates spaces and provides room for debate and change. Unfortunately too many educationalists are in the business of detecting limitations, flaws and mirages.

The Preparation of a School Charter. Charter schools are yet another way to develop a third space for introducing innovation. Charter schools have been proposed for precisely such a purpose. Charter schools have been introduced in many sections of the United States. They are a major thrust in Australia.

In Victoria, Australia, decentralization requires each individual school to establish a school charter, with the following provisions:

The focus of management is on teaching and learning for improved student outcomes. Quality self-managing schools will be characterized by: effective leadership, effective management of staff, a systematic approach to planning, efficient financial and human resource management, directly responsive to program priorities and requirements, effective decision making- practices that where appropriate, involve the whole school community, regular feedback on performance to sections of the school and to the school in the community, recognition of the principles of merit and equity, widespread opportunities for the development and leadership skills, a work environment free from sexual harassment. (Directorate of School Education, 1993)

On the face of it, the above set of propositions is laudable, even commendable. Who could possibly oppose any of the recommendations. They are in the words of an old song: 'too marvellous for words'. Australian decentralization, like decentralization in the United States, and England, is a mirage, an illusion in the absence of clearly defined educational goals. It has all of the liabilities previously cited. The student outcomes are not defined. In the absence of that definition, local management becomes an exercise in social and personal futility since the criteria against which they will be judged is centrally determined - a standardized test. The school is in effect told, that it can take any route it wants as long as the student ends up where central authority wants her or him to go. Worse, in actuality the local school is asked to prepare students for a trip, a very long and

arduous one, and the destination is kept secret. And yet, for all of the obvious pitfalls, deficiencies, slippery motivations and outright deviousness, the charter school is yet another opportunity to test theory and begin the arduous process to true school reform.

In sum, the classroom, (as distinct from "all" classrooms or a large array of randomly selected subjects whose performance is measured on arbitrary and traditional criteria, and then contrasted with the performance of comparable controls), is where theory is tested, is where educational reform begins. A general theory requires all of the community to be part of its development, in collaboration with student, parents, and teachers.

A general theory must present cogent reasons for the expected responses to educational interventions to all the students that are affected. It is only in a classroom that it is possible to make those observations and collect sufficient relevant data on all the students to determine if the reasons were actually provided and, more importantly whether students were persuaded enough to invest in the educational activities. It is only when we fully understand what is happening in a classroom can theory be given an adequate test.

It is only in the classroom that students can play an active role in the refinement of the curriculum and in the construction of assessments that would apply across the widest range of students, e.g., distinguishing between inability to complete an assignment from an unwillingness to complete an assignment. It is only in a classroom can explanations be found for the puzzling situations that inevitably occur in the day to day life of classrooms.

The classroom is a logical place for the restoration of the community to begin at least as a simplified model. And only in a classroom can frameworks and other centralized initiatives be evaluated and balanced with ideas and interests of the local community. Decentralization initiatives, for all of their deficiencies, should be viewed as an opportunity for rediscovering the importance of the classroom.

Educational Change as Exponential Function or Building a Movement for Democratic Education. Exponential function is at the heart of democratic change in any situation or in any context. The only way a move to more democracy can work in a world dominated by concentrated media beaming messages to passive populations, is for those populations to create means by which they become a part of the transmission process. Without such thinking democracy becomes an impossible project. And democracy has been viewed as an impossible project because people refuse to think about democratic possibilities. The concept of power has been usurped and the usurpers have made it generally inaccessible. It is fashionable to obsess about powerlessness and illusory power. Many academics make their living with such obsession. In contrast, democracy is not about

powerlessness, nor is it about illusory power. It is about a process of developing power and the validity of its capacity to empower can be put to continual test.

Exponential function as a problem solving exercise. If one was to apply an exponential function to human communication and in theory ask a group of students: if ten of them were to leave this room and were able to persuade ten others to vote "the green party" (or any other matter requiring a decision); and these ten in the next minute would persuade ten others, and those ten ten more, etc. How many minutes would it take for everyone in the world (Melbourne or Moscow or Santa Cruz) to be persuaded? This incidentally, is a math problem we use in a problem solving 8th grade class. The answer, of course, is ten minutes-for the entire world! Students immediately bring to our attention the lack of realism of this exercise. Which permits us to continue the discussion by pointing out that persuading everyone in the world is not a requirement in a democracy. Nor are we limited to ten minutes. What is important is to realize from this "math" problem the potential power that each of us possesses, and how we are able to broaden the ranges of our influence if we draw upon others who are working in collaboration with us.

The example cited, brings back into focus other democratic qualities previously mentioned. For such communication to take place there needs to be recognition of the importance of inclusiveness. One cannot communicate with people with whom there is no connection. It also speaks to the citizenship skills, the capacity to communicate effectively, civility, in ways that draws people to you rather than drives them away. And perhaps, most important of all, the capacity to communicate a body of knowledge sufficiently persuasive as to influence others. Thinking of democracy as exponential function, opens up many areas for discussion.

Exponential function as a calculated strategy is the process by which a democratic education is introduced into education. A good theory is tested in a single classroom, any classroom initially, and gains credibility when it is successfully replicated in 10 classrooms; then a 100; then a 1000, etc. Once a theory is shown to be useful it can be generalized as well as refined through a process of contagion carried by those who have developed and tested the theory in their classrooms.

Notes

1. This paper is part of work on developing 'A General Theory for a Democratic School' Hampton Press, N.J. (to be published 1996), by the authors of this paper

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